The Serpent and the Rose

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The Serpent and the Rose

The Immaculate Conception and Hispanic Poetry in the Late Medieval Period

by
Lesley K. Twomey

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For Derry

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FOREWORD

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception—the belief that Mary was, though conceived in the normal human way, preserved from the taint of original sin—was, like that of the Bodily Assumption, a relatively late element in Christian belief. They were formulated in the sixth century, not because of any explicit biblical authority for the beliefs but as logical deductions from the belief that Mary was chosen as the Mother of God. Yet despite their late arrival and their origin in intellectual debate—a debate that continued for many centuries—they inspired strong emotion and became firmly entrenched in popular Catholic religious life. A striking example is the enduring appeal of the Elche Assumption play, written and first performed in the fifteenth century and still drawing vast audiences today (both text and staging have, of course, evolved over the centuries).

Both beliefs were rejected by the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century, and both were resisted by some Catholic theologians: the Immaculate Conception was not proclaimed as a dogma of the Church until 1854 (the Bodily Assumption had to wait until 1950), but this did nothing to weaken the power they exercised over the imagination and the emotions of the Catholic faithful. That power may be seen in the literature and art of the late Middle Ages—perhaps more vividly then than in later times—, and the immaculist tradition in the Christian kingdoms of Spain, especially Aragon and Castile, than elsewhere in western Europe. (The iconographic presentation of the Immaculate Conception must of necessity be symbolic, whereas that of the Bodily Assumption can be directly representational.) This rich and diverse literary and iconographic tradition, used both to express and to strengthen popular devotion, and also to reinforce one side in a protracted intellectual debate within the Church, has so far lacked a comprehensive and extensive study. There have been studies of aspects of immaculist literature in Castilian or in Catalan, and studies of immaculist art in Castile or in the Crown of Aragon, but we have urgently needed a comprehensive treatment, comparing Catalan literature with

Castilian and both with art. It is that treatment that Lesley Twomey gives us in this book.

Twomey is particularly well qualified to undertake this task. Her doctoral thesis of 1995 was on fifteenth-century immaculist poetry in Castilian and Catalan, and in the last few years she has published half a dozen important articles on the subject in leading British and American journals and in the Proceedings of international conferences. Her work on the Immaculate Conception has led her to a separate book-length study of Sor Isabel de Villena, the author of a Catalan *Vita Christi*. This lengthy work, which gives prominence to the Immaculate Conception, is of special importance because it is the perfect example of late-medieval women's literature: written by a woman for an exclusive female readership (the nuns of the Valencian convent where the author was Abbess), it was kept in the convent after Sor Isabel's death until her successor as Abbess, probably encouraged by Queen Isabel, had it printed; thus the first contact that it had with any man was when it was delivered to the printer. Twomey's book on Isabel de Villena is now well advanced, and will be published—if all goes well—next year. It will be followed by one on the use of perfumes, gardens, thrones, and Eucharistic vessels to express the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

As the external examiner for Twomey's doctorate, I was impressed by the wide reading and careful thought about the issues that underlay her command of the intellectual issues in the immaculist controversy and by the way in which she brought iconographic evidence to bear in her elucidation of the poems. Her discussion of the way the issues are treated in a wide range of poems was perceptive, and her conclusions were firmly grounded in the evidence that she presented. I learned a great deal from the thesis, both about poets whose work I already knew and about those whom I had known only as a name. It was clear to me that the thesis was the basis for a very good book, and that judgment has been confirmed by the book that Twomey has written, a book that draws on extensive post-thesis reading of primary and secondary sources, on archival research, and on inspection of the iconographic evidence in Spain.

In this book, which takes as its thematic basis the unending struggle between the Marian rose and the diabolical serpent (a development of Genesis 3.15), Twomey gives a clear and expert account of the immaculist controversy and of its principal personalities (both in a wider European context and in Spain), studies the liturgical develop-

ment of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and analyses in detail the ways in which Old Testament texts were interpreted as prefigurations and prophecies of the Immaculate Conception, and the ways in which New Testament and apocryphal texts generate the iconographic symbolism that illustrates the theme. She gives particular attention to the debates in the *preguntas* and *respuestas* of the *Cancionero de Baena* (the first major Castilian anthology), the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* ascribed to Alfonso X, the poems of the Catalan *certamens*, Juan Tallante's poetry, and Jaume Roig's *Spill*; all receive detailed textual analysis. All future students of these and some other poets and collections will find her book to be essential reading. An important part of Twomey's method is her use of liturgy, poetry, and iconography to illuminate each other. From this cross-referencing she produces a coherent, intellectually satisfying, always interesting, and often moving study of a major aspect of late-medieval Hispanic culture. This is a book of exceptional importance, and it is a privilege to be able to introduce this learned and perceptive work to its readers.

Alan Deyermond

ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	Arxiu de la Corona de Aragó
ACB	Archivo de la Catedral de Barcelona
ACBO	Archivo de la Catedral de El Burgo de Osma
ACC	Archivo de la Catedral de Calahorra
ACG	Arxiu de la Catedral de Girona
ACH	Arxiu de la Catedral de Huesca
ACLl	Arxiu Capitular de Lleida
ACL	Archivo de la Catedral de León
ACP	Archivo de la Catedral de Pamplona
ACS	Archivo de la Catedral de Segovia
ACSU	Archivo Capitular de La Seu d'Urgell
ACT	Archivo Capitular de Toledo
ACV	Arxiu de la Catadral de València
ADG	Arxiu Diocesà de Girona
AEV	Arxiu Episcopal de Vic
AHT	Arxiu Històric Arcidiocesà de Tarragona
BB	Biblioteca Balaguer (Vilanova i La Geltrú)
BC	Biblioteca de Catalunya (Barcelona)
BCS	Biblioteca Colombina (Sevilla)
BET	Biblioteca del Estado, Tarragona
BL	British Library (London)
BN	Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid)
BUV	Biblioteca de la Universidad de Valencia
BUZ	Biblioteca de la Universidad de Zaragoza
Escorial	Monasterio del Escorial
Montserrat	Abadía de Montserrat

Cantigas	*Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Alfonso the Wise)
CB	*Cancionero de Baena*
CG	*Cancionero General*
LBA	*Libro de Buen Amor* (Juan Ruiz)
Loores	*Los loores de Nuestra Señora* (Gonzalo de Berceo)
Milagros	*Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (Gonzalo de Berceo)

AH	*Analecta Hymnica*
BHS	*Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*
BSS	*Bulletin of Spanish Studies*
MLN	*Modern Language Notes*

PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus siue bibliotheca universalis omnium S.S. Patrum, Doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum qui ab aevo apostolico ad usque Innocentii iii tempore floruerunt*, Series (Latina) prima

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The serpent and the rose, archetypal representations of corruption and beauty, provide an approach for examining aspects of how good and evil were represented in religious writing in the medieval period in the Iberian Peninsula. The serpent, the creature which tempted Eve in the garden of Eden, has been represented in many forms through Christian history. He is Leviathan, 'that crooked serpent' from Isaiah and, in the Book of Revelation, is the dragon against which the woman of the Apocalypse fought. He is Lucifer, the fallen angel, and the tempter who appeared to Christ in the wilderness. In literary manifestations, he gives shape to the worm which penetrates the rose in the *Roman de la Rose* [Romance of the Rose]. In his various guises, he represents temptation, evil, and death. He evolved into the epitome of sin crushed under the immaculate heel of the Virgin.

The rose also appears in many forms in secular and religious poetry (Spitzer 1950: 138). It represents beauty and perfection but it also signals how beauty withers and fades. It may signal sexual purity but also sexual union, as in the *Roman de la Rose* (Poirion 1973: 118). Yet its very form suggests interdependence between the thorn and the flower. The perfumed bloom and the thorny plant were soon a prefiguration of Mary to show her relationship to sinful humanity. Later, the rose began to be applied to her Immaculate Conception, a doctrine which declares her to have been sinless from the very first moment of her existence in her mother's womb. The doctrine began to be debated in the Middle Ages, even though it was only recognized as a dogma on 8 December 1854. The nature of the stem and its difference from the flower signals how creation, once pure but now tainted by sin and death, bears a new, purer manifestation of itself.

The serpent, evil, and the rose, perfection, take up opposing positions in a struggle between sinful nature and good, which marks out Christian belief. Hispanic literature is infused with interpretations of how Mary opposes the Evil One, saving her devotees from certain death and eternal damnation. She is always victorious and always prevents her adherents from falling into the serpent's power. Opposition

between the two is the stuff of the earliest examples of Marian writing in the Peninsula, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (*Cantigas*) [Songs of Our Lady], the colourful, encyclopaedic thirteenth-century collection of picture stories, songs, and miracles, compiled under the aegis of Alfonso X, the Wise (1221–1284), King of Castile and Leon, and of the collection of miracles by Gonzalo de Berceo (1200–1265), a secular priest attached to the monasteries of San Millán de la Cogolla and Santo Domingo de Silos, Benedictine houses on the pilgrim route between France and Santiago de Compostela in Galicia (1980). Opposition between Mary and the serpent also inspires Berceo with inspiration for another of his books, *Los loores de Nuestra Señora* (*Loores*) [The Praises of Our Lady] (1975).[1] Praise of Mary is woven into a fourteenth-century work, the *Libro de Buen Amor* (*LBA*) [Book of Good Love] (2003) by the Archpriest of Hita, Juan Ruiz (1295-96-1350). Juan Ruiz, who may have been born in Alcalá La Real and who probably studied in Toledo, was the subject of a collection of essays by Gerald Burney Gybbon-Monypenny (1970) and his work has been revisited by Louise M. Haywood and Louise O. Vasvári in their *Companion to the Libro de Buen Amor* (2004), although without any emphasis on his Marian verses.

Praise of Mary is still a central ingredient of religious poetry in the late medieval period. Many of the great Iberian Marian poets belonged to religious Orders, such as fray Íñigo de Mendoza (c.1430–c.1508), Franciscan confessor to the Catholic Monarchs, or fray Ambrosio de Montesino (1444?-1514?), a poet whose writing inspired many of the Golden Age religious poets. Ana María Álvarez Pellitero (1976) has studied Montesino's poetry with particular emphasis on his language. Franciscanism and the way it is expressed in poetry has been examined by Samuel Eiján (1935). Marcel Bataillon distinguished in the writing of Franciscan poets 'un genre de poésie dévote que l'on peut croire plus particulièrement franciscaine' [a genre of religious poetry which is thought to be particularly Franciscan] (1925: 232). His critical approach provides a referent for editions of Montesino's work (1987) and Íñigo de Mendoza's (1968).

The question of the place of learning in poetry was addressed by Charles F. Fraker (1966) who believed that poets rejected learning in favour of inspiration but his conclusions have been challenged by Julian Weiss (1990: 107–164), who shows how the university style of learning

[1] John Esten Keller's study (1978) provides a general introduction to the writing of both Berceo and Alfonso the Wise for non-specialists.

informed not only the structure of poetics but also the vernacular commentaries written in the period. Michael E. Gerli and Julian Weiss's edited collection of essays on the court poets ranges from their methods of compilation to thematic studies of politics, power, sexual anxieties, and culture (1998). The audience addressed in the *cancioneros* is one which favoured intellectual pursuits, valued book learning, and created an atmosphere where the poet-sage could flourish, of whom the epitome is Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana (1398–1458) (Weiss 1990: 163). Santillana wrote Marian poetry as well as a theory of poetics. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán (1376–1460?), Lord of Batres, uncle of Santillana, was one of the most revered of the poet-nobles in the fifteenth century, although in modern times, as Weiss shows (1991: 96), his poetry has been denied acclaim and, as Michel García notes in his introduction to Dorothy Severin and Fiona Maguire's edition of the *Cancionero de Oñate-Castañeda*, it has often lacked critical attention (1990: xxii). Pérez de Guzmán's poems were copied and recopied into all the principal *cancionero* collections, including the *Cancionero de Baena* (*CB*) and the *Cancionero General* (*CG*), with many *cancioneros* beginning with transcriptions of his verse (Beltran Pepió 1998b: 30). Both Santillana and Gómez Manrique (1412–1490) produced *cancioneros de autor* [single author *cancioneros*], important for modern understanding of how poetry was collected and transmitted (Beltran Pepió 1998a). The Manriques were one of the principal noble families at the court of the Trastamaras and Gómez Manrique was uncle to another famous medieval poet, Jorge Manrique.

The *cancioneros* also included poems from mercenary poets, like Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino (1345–1425), whose poems were commissioned by the nobility. Villasandino has been considered a poet who versified with the greatest 'ease and originality' (Clarke 1943: 185). In the rubric at the opening of the *cancionero*, he is eulogized as:

> muy sabio y discreto varón e muy singular componedor en esta muy graçiosa arte de la poetría e gaya çiençia […], el qual, por graçia infusa que Dios en él puso, fue esmalte e luz e espejo e corona e monarca de todos los poetas e trobadores que fasta oy fueron en toda España. (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 11)
>
> [a very wise and learned man and a most singular composer in this most gracious art of poetry and troubadour lore, who, by grace of God, was jewel, light, mirror, crown, and monarch of all the poets and troubadours who have lived in Spain to this day.]

Because of the positioning of his work at the start of the *CB*, Villasandino must be considered one of the most important poets of his period (Blecua 2001: 67). The *CB* opens with his Marian works. *Cancionero* poets wrote in honour of Mary's joys, events worthy of celebration in both her life and that of her son, and many address the theme of Mary's immaculate nature.

Praise of the Virgin is a rich theme in each of the different generations of *cancionero* literature from the late fourteenth to the fifteenth century.[2] These monumental compilations of poetry and prose, for many years denied acclaim by the critics, are only beginning to receive the attention their importance merits (Botta 1996: 351). Reinstatement of the *cancioneros* has taken over thirty years with important contributions to new ways of understanding their contribution to Hispanic poetics (Weiss 1990) and their use of scholastic forms (Chas Aguión 1997, 2000, 2001, 2002). Twenty years before Patricia Botta, Keith Whinnom had called for the need for modern critics to leave aside their 'moderna sensibilidad'. He also argued that poetry which appeared 'insípida' might have unsuspected depths (1968–1969: 369, 381). However, despite the revival of interest in them, the religious poems are still the poor relation of *cancionero* criticism. This has focused more on the poems which contribute to understanding of courtly love, or on their contribution to political commentary, than on spiritual or theological themes in lyric. Weiss rightly points out that, despite critical interest in it, love poetry 'is by no means the dominant mode' in the *CB* (1990: 53). Dorothy Severin's contention that only the most popular of poetry made it into printed editions and that there was no amatory verse published before 1496 reinforces the point.

Some aspects of religious poetry in the *cancioneros* have been accorded greater attention than others. Study of Jewish and *converso* rivalries in poetry has been abundant (Fraker 1966a, 1966b, 1966c, 1974; Scholberg 1971: 303–354; Rodríguez Puértolas 1972, 1998). Alan Deyermond's long publishing career includes many studies of religious themes in the *cancioneros* (1989c, 1998b, 1999b). It is significant that in his study of the use of the Bible in Juan del Encina's poetry (1999b), he notes

[2] The first generation of poets included Villasandino and flourished between 1375 and 1425. The second generation was between 1425 and 1479 and included poets like the Marqués de Santillana. The third generation of poets were those active at the court of the Catholic Monarchs, like Juan Álvarez Gato and Nicolás Núñez (Alvar & Gómez Moreno 1987: 92; Dutton & Roncero López 2004: 28–49; on the identity of Núñez, see also Deyermond 1989b).

that its presence is so obvious that it has never been properly studied. The same could be argued of the Marian poetry present in the *cancioneros*.

Michel Darbord has studied the religious poetry of Íñigo de Mendoza, Montesino, and Juan Tallante in his approach to poetry beginning with the age of the Catholic Monarchs (1965). Juan Tallante was a poet, probably from Murcia, with strong Valencian connections, about whom little biographical detail is known. He was well regarded in Valencian poetic circles, one indication of this being that sixteen of his poems open the *CG*. Pierre le Gentil has touched on the Marian works of earlier poets, Alfonso the Wise, Juan Ruiz, Santillana, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, fray Íñigo de Mendoza, and Tallante, in his study of Joys literature in a short chapter on 'Chanson pieuse' (1949–1952: I, 297–324).

Poetry about the Passion of Jesus Christ in the *cancioneros* has also attracted critical attention. An important study is still Jane Tillier's unpublished thesis (1985b), as well as her study of *cancionero* Passion poetry (1985a), whilst Pedro Cátedra, in his recent edition of the *Cancionero de Pero Gómez de Ferrol* (2001), has provided an overview of Passion literature in Castilian, taking into account the liturgies that inspired it. In addition, studies and editions of the work of individual poets can hardly fail to address their religious poetry, such as the Castalia edition of Santillana's verse, which includes a brief introduction to his *Gozos* [Joys] poem and to his poem to Our Lady of Guadalupe (2003: 60–61). Kenneth Scholberg's *Introducción a la poesía de Gómez Manrique* (1984: 37–43) provides a brief study of his religious poetry. Julio Rodríguez Puértolas's editions of Íñigo de Mendoza's *Coplas de Vita Christi* (1968) and of Montesino's *Cancionero* (1987) also provide an approach to religious poetry.

Among the *cancioneros* can be found narrative accounts of the Virgin's life, often based on stories outside the canon of accepted Christian books. Íñigo de Mendoza wrote a *Vita Christi* [Life of Christ] in Castilian verse, incorporated into many poetry collections, including the *Cancionero de Egerton* (LB3). It dedicates sections of the life of Christ to Mary, and focuses on her early life. Such stories provide another way of defending her Immaculate Conception. Another important aspect of religion and poetry which has attracted critical attention is the influence of Moorish poetry on romance literature. Ian Macpherson and Angus MacKay (1998) examine the interface between the three religions co-existing in Spain and address one aspect of how it influenced

representation of the Virgin in fifteenth-century Spain: the insignia of the Order of the Jar and the Griffin.

Marian poetry is at the centre of literary life in the kingdom of Aragon in the fifteenth century, where poetry competitions, *certàmens*, were held to mark important feast days, like the Annunciation, 25 March or to honour saints' days, like St Christopher, on 26 July (Ferrando Francés 1983: 138, 160). The *certàmens* mirrored Provençal competitions, the *Jocs Florals* [Flower Contests] and the Crown was involved in the setting up of the Barcelona Consistory (Boase 1978: 139). *Certàmens* were always written for ecclesiastical circles, although noble and bourgeois poets contributed. The collection of entries from the competition marking the Annunciation was published as *Les trobes en lahors de la Verge Maria* [Poems in Praise of the Virgin Mary], one of the first printed books in the Peninsula. The competition organizers offered the prize of a roll of black velvet to the winning entry, although, by sleight of hand, the prize was not awarded, probably to avoid offending any of the illustrious entrants, many of them noted figures of the Valencian Church or eminent city dignitaries.[3]

The feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception was marked by its own poetry competition held in Valencia on 8 December 1486 in the buildings owned by the Cofraria de la Sacratíssima Concepció at the request of Ferrando Díeç, a priest, born just after 1432, who was son of Rodrigo Díeç, Lord of Andilla. There were several prizes offered by Díeç: a rod of Jesse, a ruby, a marzipan prize, and a sailing map. Each of the poets was also to be given a bunch of flowers and the place where they presented their entries was decorated as though it were a 'praderia' [meadow]. Medieval literature written in Catalan is not frequently studied outside the regions where the language is spoken, and this study is the first in English to focus on the *certamen* poems. One of those who contributed to the competitions was Jaume Roig (d.1478), a doctor, highly regarded in Valencia and a member of the bourgeoise. Roig's *Espill o Llibre de les dones* (*Espill*) [Mirror or Book of Ladies] aims to praise Mary but also denigrates women, for they cannot live up to the standards set by the perfect Virgin. Michael Solomon (1997) interprets Roig's book as a medical treatise, Rosanna Cantavella (1992) highlights its misogynist approach, and Robert Archer focuses on its humour (2005). Roig was a religious man and was a benefactor of

[3] Details about all the *certamen* entrants are based on Antoni Ferrando Francés's research (1983: 166–247, 386–430). All translations are the author's own.

the convent of the Santa Trinidad in Valencia, where his daughter was a nun and where the abbess was Isabel de Villena (1432–1490).

Despite being one of the most enduring themes in medieval Hispanic literature, a critical study of Marian literature is long overdue. Many studies of mariology do not cover literary manifestations at all (Graef 1963–1965; Warner 1976; Pelikan 1996; Boss 1999), although all have become standard as departure points for study of Marian literature. Some major studies of how the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception developed have been written (O'Connor 1958; Lamy 2000). Neither has focused on Spain's contribution to the doctrine. Mirella Levi d'Ancona (1957) studied the Immaculate Conception in relation to art and Suzanne Stratton (1994) has provided an excellent study of how it is represented in Spanish art, establishing how it differs from Northern Europe or Italy, but she does not seek to establish any link between art and literature. No comparable work to Stratton's dealing with manifestations of the doctrine across a broad spectrum of literary works has been written, although one article has attempted an overview of literary manifestations of the doctrine in the Peninsula, without taking any account of Catalan authors (Riera Estarellas 1955). Ramon Arqués i Arrufat studied its development in a representative group of Catalan authors, including Francesc Eiximenis, Bernat Metge, Roig, the *certamen* poets, but excluding Isabel de Villena (1430–1490), in a brief monograph (1904). In recent years, articles concentrating on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the work of individual authors have appeared (Howe 1980, 1986; Mayberry 1991, 1997; Twomey 2003b). Given that few critical studies have given attention to understanding the Immaculate Conception, it is hardly surprising that the fascinating difference between the way the doctrine was treated in literature in the neighbouring kingdoms of Castile and Aragon has never been explored. The present study seeks to partially remedy that omission, providing a study of literature, art, and liturgy. The book will provide a comparative study of the most important poetic texts about Mary in Hispanic literature using understanding gained in dedicated immaculist literature to aid understanding of the same themes in poems which do not declare support for it.

The Conception of Mary is approached from four different perspectives in the present study. I first chart the maelstrom of debate, which arose once the very first treatises on the nascent doctrine were written. I examine how the doctrine developed and the main points of contention in the medieval period, as well as setting it within the wider context of

mariology. I will also track how the debate over Mary's nature between university teachers and between members of the two mendicant Orders began to be reflected in literary output.

Next, liturgies adopted in Spain to celebrate the newly instituted Conception feast from the end of the twelfth century are examined. This brief overview builds an understanding of the Conception and its celebration in dioceses across Spain. References to Hispanic liturgy, readings, responses, and antiphons, will inform each of the chapters to show how biblical themes were mediated by it.

The main emphasis of the book will be an exploration of those principal biblical texts which provided scriptural backing for the doctrine. I begin by examining Old Testament themes and how they were used in the works of poets and authors in the late medieval period. At the same time I will point to how they were understood at particular moments in the development of the doctrine. In this section of the book, I explore how love lyrics, sung to the young woman in the Song of Songs, were applied to Mary by Hispanic poets. It is from them that many of the images of Mary's beauty, purity, and perfection are drawn: the matchless maiden, the rose without thorn, and other floral and symbolic representations of the Immaculate Conception, including the lily, the sealed fountain, and the enclosed garden. The mighty battle between the woman and the serpent, described in Genesis 3.15, became symbolic of the way the Virgin began to be represented as the vanquisher of sin and death.

Another powerful set of tools for the poetic representation of Mary is taken from Wisdom literature. Medieval theologians and liturgists make the connection between creation of Wisdom and of Mary and these allusions are tracked into Hispanic literature. In a chapter which links study of the Old Testament and the New, I will examine the way in which the parallel between Mary and Eve developed into a signifier of the Immaculate Conception.

In the final chapter, I explore how extra-biblical stories taken from the Apocryphal Gospels fill the gaps left by scant reference to Mary in the New Testament. Such stories complement Old Testament prefigurations of Mary adapted to illustrate aspects of her sanctity. They nourish the desire to know how she was conceived, how she was born, and how she lived an exemplary life. Mary's Conception proved an interesting challenge for artists, who began to use a range of different images to depict it. The New Testament also supplies poets, authors, and artists with Marian symbolism from Revelation. Mary depicted

as the archetypal Woman, crowned with stars, robed in the sun, and with her feet planted on the moon, has become synonymous with the Immaculate Conception because of being used by famous Spanish artists. The image of Mary descending from heaven on the crescent moon is a powerful way of depicting the infusion of grace but it is also easily confused with that of her ascending at her Assumption. It will be important to assess when it first began to apply to her Conception. A study of texts, miniatures, and altar paintings will make it possible to determine whether there are fifteenth-century antecedents of what would become the epitome of Mary Immaculate in the following century. Literature and art and the synergies between them illuminate how the symbolism surrounding the Conception began to develop. Both New Testament themes, the Apocryphal Gospels and the apocalyptic vision, became main sources of inspiration for both poets and artists.

Study of aspects of how Mary is represented in poetry, in liturgy, and in art will illuminate understanding of Mary's place in the Church's teaching in the Middle Ages. In contrast to this, study of doctrinal and liturgical development in the late medieval period will shed fresh light on poetry being written at the time. The struggle between the serpent and the rose is performed in the words, gestures, and song of the liturgy, which transmits and transposes them into the consciousness of the medieval poets and authors writing about Mary's attributes and her life. It is the confluence of ideas between the three strands of human expression, theological, liturgical, and poetic, which guides the first steps along a much needed avenue of study.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTION LITURGIES: IN PRAISE OF THE ROSE

The history of the Conception must begin by charting how the feast came about and how and where it was celebrated. I will then focus on establishing how the history of the feast began in the Peninsula and examine the type of liturgies used for its celebration from its earliest appearances to the end of the fifteenth century.

The story begins between the third and fifth centuries, when apocryphal histories about Mary began to circulate. Analogy with the Gospel events surrounding the birth of John, Christ's Precursor, fuelled the development of Apocryphal Gospels, which sought to satisfy the wishes of early believers to know more about the Mother of Jesus. Writing of Apocryphal Gospels also sprang from the desire to ensure parity for Mary with other saints. The details of the stories about Mary's birth and girlhood, as well as their connection with the Conception doctrine, are to be examined later in this study (see below, Chapter 10). Stefano de Fiores sees these stories as a first intuitive consciousness of the perfect sanctity of Mary (1988: 614). The stories, such as the one about how Salomé, the midwife, wishes to have physical evidence that Mary remained a Virgin after the birth and how her hand was withered for her temerity, were influenced by docetic tradition. Despite influences from traditions, like docetism, which the Church was to declare heretical, the stories were soon accepted.

Once stories about Mary's birth were in circulation, the second stage of development was the introduction of a feast-day. John the Baptist was already different from all the other saints because of the celebration of his birth on earth, rather than his birth into heaven. Now, Mary was to stand out from other saints in the same way. The link established between John and Mary lead to pressure to parallel the Nativity feast of John with one for Mary. Analogy with the existing feast day meant that no new doctrine was required in order for the Conception feast to be introduced. The new feast marked out Mary's specialness, opening the way for further development of how that could have occurred.

There was, however, a further precedent for establishing a non-Gospel feast for the Nativity of Mary in the way in which the Dormi-

tion, or Transitus, and later the Assumption, had developed. The Dormition developed into the Assumption because early Christians were unwilling to accept that Mary's perfect body could have undergone decay in the earth (Shoemaker 2002). The feast was first celebrated in the East and then became known in the West. Mary's Nativity feast took the same route. It was established during the sixth or seventh century, and spread to the West, where it was introduced on 8 September (Barré 1955; Stacpoole 1982: 218; Boss 1999: 124).

Following the introduction of the Nativity feast in a small number of dioceses, attention began to turn to establishing the mechanics of Mary's preparation for a holy birth. The Gospel of Luke describes John the Baptist's leap of recognition at the visit of his Saviour and it was his sanctification in the womb that his feast-day recognized. Once the Nativity was established, the question of whether Mary had been sanctified in the womb to prepare her for her birth had to be resolved.

The Conception feast developed in several stages. By the early eighth century, a feast-day dedicated to the mother of Mary, St Anne, was being celebrated in the East on 9 December, a feast set just nine months before the Nativity (Warner 1976: 239; Ricossa 1994: 21). In Constantinople, it had been called the feast of St Anne. When it appeared in Naples in 840–850 AD, the feast was known as the Conception of the Virgin (Levi d'Ancona 1957: 11–12; Ricossa 1994: 24). It had spread from the East with monks fleeing the iconoclast persecutions and was taken up first in the Greek monasteries (Stacpoole 1982: 219). The feast celebrated two events: St Anne and the physical act of conceiving Mary, and the moment of the passive conception, when the Virgin took form in the womb of her mother.[1] Eventually, Mary's name took precedence and the feast of St Anne was moved to 26 July.

For a time, it was believed that the Conception feast originated in Ireland but Lamy argues that its presence at 3 May in the Leinster martyrology was a misreading for another saint's name (2000: 32). The feast became established in England shortly after the time of the Norman Conquest.[2] It was being celebrated in various dioceses by the

[1] There were strong precedents in the calendar for this dual conception. In the same way, the feast of the Annunciation on 25 March celebrated the moment when the Virgin conceived and gave her assent, as well as honouring the moment when Christ began his life in her womb.

[2] This theory was developed by Edmund Bishop (1904) and most historians follow his lead (Van Dijk 1954: 253–262; Woolf 1968: 116; Stacpoole 1982: 219). Bishop

twelfth century and was then defended by the first treatises, which addressed the issue of how Mary had been pure at the moment of her conception.[3]

Evidence of the Feast in Spain

According to Lesmes Frías, the earliest recorded Hispanic decree requiring observance of the Conception feast of 8 December appears in a statute by the Archbishop of Santiago, Rudericus, written on 23 May 1309.[4] He also notes that the first diocese to record instituting the celebration of the Conception feast was Barcelona in 1281, although he asserts there was no evidence of the feast being kept until a hundred years later (1954a: 37, n.13; 51). Evidence of Conception liturgy from the Barcelona diocese is very thin.[5] The nearby diocese of Gerona has greater proof with the first of a range of liturgies dating from 1339 (*Breviarium gerundense* [ACG 125]). Given their highly developed nature, it is clear that the diocese had initiated celebration of the feast at an

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describes how Helsin was urged in a vision to introduce the feast into England and versions of it circulated under the name of Anselm, see the *Sermo de conceptione Beatae Mariae* (PL 159, cols 319–327). However, he considers it was known in the pre-Conquest period, being already celebrated in major religious centres, such as Winchester, Canterbury, and Ramsey. It is included in early English missals. Bishop considers that the original Anglo-Saxon feast must have been stamped out by the invading Normans.

[3] Prior to the twelfth century, numerous writers had written about Mary's purity and had even used the words immaculate or without stain to describe her. The Syrian, Ephraem, is a case in point. Often held to be the first Father to have written in favour of the Immaculate Conception, he wrote in one of his Nisibene Hymns: 'Only Thou [Christ] alone and Thy Mother are wholly beautiful; for neither in Thee, nor in Thy Mother is any stain' (Davis 1960: 93). Graef, however, shows how he places the moment of Mary's purification at the time when 'the light came to dwell in her' or at the moment of her conception of Christ. Graef considers that the Eastern Church used terms such as immaculate with readiness, taking them to imply outstanding moral and physical purity, rather than freedom from original sin (1963–1965: I, 112). The twelfth-century treatises are those by Eadmer and Nicholas of St Albans to be discussed in the next chapter (see Lamy 2000: 105–146).

[4] Mirella Levi d'Ancona gives a date of the late twelfth century for the institution of the Conception in Spain but does not provide any evidence (1957: 13).

[5] Only a small number of manuscripts proving the existence of the feast in Barcelona are preserved in the cathedral archives. These include a *santoral* (ACB Codex 104), an *ordinatio* (ACB Codex 77b), and a *flos sanctorum* (ACB Codex 105). In addition, a Barcelona breviary is in the Arxiu Episcopal at Vich (AEV 82).

earlier date.[6] The kingdom of Navarre also records a Conception feast in a breviary dating from 1330 (ACP 18).

A number of developments testify to the growing importance of the feast, particularly in the kingdom of Aragon. In 1400, in Seu d'Urgell, it was put on an equivalent footing to the Assumption and the Nativity. In Valencia, the feast of the Conception was celebrated with *certàmens*, held on 8 December in 1440 and 1486. In Barcelona diocese, there was a *Cofradía* of the Conception and an altar dedicated to the Conception was established in 1494 (Mas 1906: 71, n.328).

Evidence from liturgies in Castile shows that the feast was established by the late fourteenth century.[7] However, not all breviaries include it. An Augustinian breviary, dating from 1433 (ACT 37.2), has no record of it nor does a Dominican one from the early fifteenth century (ACT 37.5). In the fourteenth century, some Franciscan breviaries did not originally include the feast in the calendar but it has been added (ACT 33.11, 33.12).

Frías also highlights how confusion arose over two Conception feasts because both celebrated conceptions, although different ones. The first was to celebrate Mary's conception and bearing of Christ, and is sometimes called the December Annunciation. It was celebrated on 18 December. The feast on 8 December celebrated Mary's own conception. The confusion arose because both *conceptio* and *conceptus* are used interchangeably.

The feast for 18 December was allegedly instituted by St Ildephonse (d.667), Archbishop of Toledo, and features in Spanish liturgical calendars, particularly in Castile and dioceses bordering it. It is found with particular frequency in Huesca and Lerida. It was important in Spain largely because of its institution by St Ildephonse, but also because it was associated with a miracle performed by the Virgin and included in many miracle collections. Some breviaries, missals, and books of hours include St Ildephonse's feast, where it is given a range of different titles. The feast of the 18 December is sometimes called the feast of the

[6] The Gerona Conception liturgies include hymns specifically developed to accompany the liturgy. For this reason, I contend that they are more developed than other liturgies, many of which indicate that the Nativity liturgy is to be used on 8 December with the term Conception substituted for Nativity. See, for example, a Toledo missal (ACT 37.23), at fol. 29^{v}, where 'in die conceptionis' [on the day of the Conception] is written in the margin alongside the liturgy for the feast of the Nativity.

[7] See, for example, the Segovia breviary (ACS B288), the Toledo *consueta* (ACT 42.31), and Benedictine breviary (Escorial g.IV.29).

Expectation; and sometimes called the feast day of the Annunciation of Our Lord or of Mary.[8] It appears with far less frequency in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century liturgical books than the feast at 8 December.[9]

It is the December Annunciation feast which is the object of the first miracle in Berceo's *Milagros*. His comments on the timing of the feast place it within Advent, when the Church did not sing the Gloria and other joyful chants: 'Entonz cae un tiempo, esto por connocía, / non canta la eglesia canto de alegría, / non lieva so derecho tan sennalado día' [Then there falls a time, this was well known / when the church does not sing chants of joy, / it does not hold under its rule such a noteworthy day] (1980: 47, ll.54a–54c). Berceo also notes that the feast St Ildephonse instituted was close to Christmas (l.55a).

Close connection with the feast of St Anne was maintained in many areas of Spain, even in the fifteenth century. For example, an Escorial *devotionarium* (d.IV.13) has a short Conception office that includes prayers for the Virgin's mother. The fifteenth-century *Breviario de Pamplona* (ACP 21, fol. 280^{r}) uses the readings for the feast of St Anne at the Conception, beginning 'Erat uir no[m]i[n]e Ioachim ex tribu Iuda' [There was a man named Joachim from the tribe of Judah].

Miracles and the Conception

Just like St Ildephonse's feast, the Conception was promoted by a number of miracles about how it was instituted (Bishop 1904: 8; Levi d'Ancona 1957: 12; Lamy 2000: 93). The most important is that of Helsinus, Helsin, Aelsi, or Elsinus and its main purpose is to act as propaganda for the feast (PL 159, 319–320; 323–324). The story relates how Helsin,

[8] The feast is called the *Expectatio* in the following breviaries and liturgical books: *Breviarium gerundense*, s.XIII (ACG 125), fol. 6^{v}; *Breviario romano adaptado al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN 9082), fol. 22^{v}; *Misal franciscano para el uso del convento de clarisas de Astudilla, Palencia* (BN 9469), fol. 6^{v}; *Breviario romano y suplemento al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN Res. 186), fol. 426^{r}; *Diurnum romanum* (BN 557), fol. 6^{v}; *Diurnal y oficio virginal y horas canónicas de la Virgen Nuestra Señora en lengua latina y vitela* [sic] (BN 875), fol. 5^{v}. It is called 'Santa Maria de la Sperança' in the British Library Catalan breviary (BL Add. 18193), fol. 12^{v}. The feast is called the Annunciation in the *Breviario de Toledo*, (ACT 33.6), fol. 6^{v}; *Breviario de Toledo* (ACT 33.7), fol. 6^{v}; *Breviario de Toledo* (ACT 33.9), fol. 11^{v}; *Missal de Toledo para el uso del Arzobispo Carrillo* (ACT Res.1), fol. 274^{r}; *Breviario de Segovia* (ACS B288), fol. 7^{v}.

[9] Thirteen liturgical texts include the 18 December feast out of seventy-eight liturgical texts examined.

abbot of Ramsey, set off on a mission to Denmark on behalf of William, Duke of Normandy. The events of the story take place shortly after the Norman Conquest, when the Danes, shocked at the invasion of Britain and defeat of Harold by the Normans, are planning a counter-attack.[10] Helsin, is caught in a freak storm on his return to Britain, and, in despair, he and his entourage call on the protection of the Virgin. She sends a bishop-angel to advise them to begin celebration of the Conception feast at Ramsey on their return. If they promise to undertake this mission, then the storm will be calmed, and they will be saved. Once they agree, the storm miraculously abates and they continue safely to shore. A miniature of Helsin and his companions in a boat provides a unique illustration of the Conception in Hispanic archives, although the breviary was written in Italy (BN Vitr.21.6, fol. 447^{r}).

Versions of the miracle, thought to be by St Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), proved regular components of Hispanic Conception liturgies and are used in combination with texts from Scripture or from Fathers of the Church as readings for the feast-day.[11] It continues to be used as late as 1487 (ACSU incunable 147). On rare occasions, the Helsin story provides nine lessons for the feast.[12] Lamy discusses its presence in several French breviaries but does not mention its connections to Spain (2000: 99–103).

The miracle is found in many major Latin collections.[13] Despite its constant use in Hispanic breviaries, the miracle is not found in any of

[10] Many of the Spanish manuscripts substitute Dacia for the distant Denmark. These include the Segovia breviary (ACS B288), fol. 311^{r}, *Breviario franciscano* (ACT 34.3), fol. 16^{r}, *Matutinario* (ACT 34.4), fol. 73^{v}, Toledo breviaries (ACT 33.6; ACT 33.7), fol. 451^{v}, fol. 449^{r}, and a Hieronymite breviary (BN Res.186), fol. 424^{v}.

[11] Toledo breviaries (ACT 33.6, 33.7, 33.9), a Franciscan breviary (ACT 34.3), a Toledo *Matutinario* (34.4), Hieronymite breviary (BN Res. 186), *Breviario de Toledo adaptado al uso del convento de Uclés* (BN 8902), and Segovia breviaries (ACS B288, B272) present related versions of the narrative. Also, the structure of the office and the order of antiphons are similar. All have a Toledo diocese connection except for BN 9082, which has no apparent connection with the diocese, having being produced in Italy. However, it was written for the Hieronymites and it too has many similarities with the others. BN Vitr. 21.6 also uses the Helsin miracle for the lessons but the structure of the office is different. In the opening rubric, there is an instruction for the Nativity office to be used. Conception offices produced in other areas of Spain do not use the same antiphons nor do they use the Helsin legend for the readings.

[12] See, for example, ACT 33.9, fols. 515^{r}–516^{r}.

[13] The miracle is found in many collections. Bernard Pez's collection of miracles from Heiligenkreuz (1731), and in Ambrosiana C 150, Vienna (ms 625), National Library, Paris (BN Lat. 14463 and Lat.2333A), Leipzig Library (ms 819) (Mussafia 1886: 940, 949, 951, 953, 971, 981); Paris National Library (BN 5268), a collection found in

the major thirteenth-century Hispanic vernacular miracle collections. Two of them contain a number of miracles that combine the elements of storms and shipwrecks (Alfonso the Wise 1959–1964, I, 107–108; II, 31–32; III, 43–46; III, 155–157; III, 219–221; Berceo 1980: 177–185). Juan Carlos Bayo argues that the storm in Berceo's miracle derives from the Helsin one (2004: 858). Alfonso's miracle 36 derives from a truncated version of the Helsin miracle. It has all reference to the feast of the Conception omitted. Gil de Zamora (c.1280) also dedicates a chapter of his miracle collection, *Liber mariae*, to 'De liberatis ab aquis' [About those freed from the waters]. The original version of the Helsin story is included in BN 9503 (Bayo 2004: 858).

Readings for the two liturgies developed in the fifteenth century through the changes made by Juan de Segovia (d.1458), Professor of Theology at Salamanca University, and by Leonardo de Nogarolis. Segovia gave more importance to authoritative statements from the decree, *Elucidantibus*, issued by the Council of Basle (Ricossa 1994: 125–127), although he kept the miracles for use during the octave (1857–1896: III.1, 366–381) and Nogarolis replaced the miracles by statements in favour of the doctrine by Church Fathers (BC 1043, fols. 14^{r}–15^{v}). The importance of authority, particularly theological, is integral to defence of the doctrine and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Devotionaries and Conception offices

Peninsular devotionaries add important evidence to understanding of the progress of the Conception in Spain. They show that the office was available for private devotion to those who could afford to purchase a manuscript. This would include the nobility, and, possibly men and women of letters, like the clerics and poets writing *cancionero* and *certamen* verse.

The fifteenth-century *Opera spiritualia* [Spiritual Works] (BN 9533), contains a number of Conception hymns which are not found elsewhere in the Peninsula: *Salue orologium* [Hail, time-piece], *Salue virgo*

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three manuscripts (Brit. Mus. Arundel 346, BN Lat. 18168, and Montpellier 146), Vatican Library (Regina 537), Bern Library (ms 137), Brit. Mus. (Cleop. C.20) and Toulouse (ms 482), Cambridge University (Mm 6.15) (Mussafia 1887: 6, 12, 15, 20, 32, 38); Erfurt (königl. Bibliothek 44), Ghent Library (ms 245) (Mussafia 1889: 14, 21); English miracle collections including William of Malmesbury's collection (Mussafia 1890: 19, 23, 27).

florida, *salue sapiencia* [Hail, virgin in flower, hail wisdom], *Salue mu[n]di d[omi]na* [Hail, Queen of the world]. *Opera spiritualia* (BN 9533) is also distinguished by its overarching Marian focus. It has all the psalms and canticles rewritten in a Marian format, including the *Te Deum* as *Te matrem laudamus* [Let us praise you, Mother] and the *Laudate* as *Laudate dominam nostram* [Praise Our Lady] (fol. 109r). The structure of the devotional work, like the second Conception office in *Varia ascetica* (Montserrat 830), has some similarities to the core group of Toledo offices (ACT 33.6, 33.7, 33.9, and BN Res. 186), particularly at first night prayer where the responses and antiphons are ordered exactly as in the Toledo cluster.

Varia ascetica (Montserrat 830) is a *florilegium* of devotional texts containing a life of St Bernard, the Meditations of St Anselm, and three Conception offices, one of them rhymed. The second office uses the Helsin miracle with alternative readings from two other miracle stories. The first office uses the sermon of Osbert of Clare headed by the greeting from St Anselm, which precedes many accounts of the Helsin miracle.

Juan de Segovia's Conception Office, 1440

Juan de Segovia's office draws on many antiphons from the Little Office of the Virgin, combining them with extracts from *Elucidantibus* and with extracts from the Fathers of the Church (Ricossa 1994: 54–55). Ricossa does not mention either the existence of other offices in the Peninsula or the connections between them and Juan de Segovia's. Given the high number of offices recorded in the latter part of the fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries, Juan de Segovia must have been aware of them. His office begins vespers with a verse from Proverbs 8.22: 'Dominus possedit me in inicio viarum suarum' [God possessed me in the beginning of his ways] (Ricossa 1994: 121). Ricossa writes as though Juan de Segovia were responsible for associating the text with the Virgin (1994: 56). However, this is the preferred *capitulum* for the majority of Castilian Conception offices and its use by Villasandino in his *cancionero* poem suggests it was already connected to them by the end of the second decade of the fifteenth century. Study of Conception offices in the Peninsula has shown that Juan de Segovia's office was either not widely used there or not retained once Nogarolis's office came into circulation. In Gerona, with its determined immaculism

and long history of supporting it, Cathedral clergy appear to have abandoned their indigenous office after the Council of Basle. Juan de Segovia's office replaced the original Sanctification of the Conception office and was appended to the 1339 breviary (ACG 125, fols. 4^{r}–7^{v}).

Leonardo de Nogarolis's Conception office, *1477*

Nogarolis's office is in evidence in various Peninsular archives, including Toledo Cathedral (ACT 33.13), the Biblioteca de Catalunya (BC 1043), the Biblioteca Colombina, Seville (BCS R–219), the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid (BN 4437), although in a seventeenth-century manuscript. There are printed copies in the University of Zaragoza library, and in the Episcopal archives at Vich (AEV 1557). Nogarolis's office is found in royal breviaries and was used by Isabel la Católica (Escorial, Vitrinas 3). Versions of Nogarolis's Conception mass abound. It is found in the Biblioteca Colombina in fifteenth-century versions, at the cathedral of Pamplona in a printed missal from 1494, and at Seu d'Urgell in all local missals printed after 1502. It gradually began to replace indigenous Conception offices. This process can best be seen at Vich, where Nogarolis's office is written in the margins of the *Consueta* [Book of Custom and Practice] (AEV 31.18). The *Consueta* should probably be dated prior to 1477 and the feast was added in the margins to replace previous practice of using the Nativity office.

Nogarolis's office is different from indigenous offices in its move towards readings that compile a series of citations from the Fathers of the Church, including St Thomas Aquinas (1225 or 1227–1274), St Bernard, St Augustine, and other important theologians. Nogarolis's innovative approach continues to be employed in Conception offices and treatises into the sixteenth century (see Twomey 2003b). The way in which the use of citations, taken from scholastic defence of the nascent doctrine, began to influence Conception poetry is discussed in Chapter 4.

Major Biblical Themes in Conception Offices

Liturgists did not merely seek to convince with the weight of authority to support celebration of the feast. It was also their intention to win over hearts and minds to the noble cause of celebrating the perfect

beauty and matchless purity of the Virgin. There existed a climate of courtly love in which praise of the lady was paramount. Taking this context into account, I will assess how the Conception liturgies chose to praise Mary and honour her above all other saints.

The opening antiphon of the office, sung at the first vespers in an office produced for the use of the Hieronymites in the Toledo diocese (BN Res.186), allies two biblical images, that of the light shining in darkness, and that of the rose.[14] The light image is applied to the Incarnation of Christ in the New Testament (John 1.5) and, in the opening antiphon, Mary is called upon to rejoice in the light coming into the world. The reference to gloom can be understood as symbolizing sin, dispelled by the light, brought into the world through the Incarnation. The liturgy develops light images representing Mary in subsequent antiphons in the same vespers office. The way Juan de Segovia develops the antiphon from the Little Office of the Virgin to give more emphasis to the prophecy in Genesis 3.15 is an indication of the importance being accorded to it as a defence of the Immaculate Conception (Ricossa 1994: 63): 'Gaude maria Virgo que, contritura caput Dyaboli, illi per culpam numquam subiecta fuisset' [Rejoice, Virgin Mary, who crushed the head of the Devil, and was never subject to him through sin]. The struggle between the Virgin and the serpent, representative of evil, and the way it influences poetic texts is addressed in Chapter 5.

Conception offices vary enormously in the choice of scripture readings to fit with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. 'Dominus possedit me' is used in the majority of Castilian breviaries at vespers. The way it is applied in poetry are discussed in Chapter 8.

Juan de Segovia uses another biblical text, which has become inseparable from the Conception doctrine, at the antiphon for the Magnificat: 'Tota pulchra es, amica mea' [You are wholly beautiful, my beloved]. It is also found in a small number of Peninsular breviaries, such as the Urgell incunabile printed in 1487, where it appears as a *responsorium* at first night prayer. Nogarolis also adopts it as one of the first vespers antiphons in his office. The text from the Song of Songs 4.7 is used in offices dated after 1440. Its use in poetry is discussed in Chapter 6.

[14] Of the Toledo group of manuscripts, the Hieronymite breviary (BN Res.186) presents the best structured liturgy. Most of the other Toledo manuscripts use similar antiphons but thematic coherence has been lost in copying. For the way that the rose without thorn developed into a Conception signifier, see Chapter 7.

Comparison between Eve and Mary is an important theme in Juan de Segovia's office. It developed out of a text by Paschasius Radbertus, which he attributes to St Ildephonse (see Ricossa 1994: 62). It provides one of the main cornerstones of the Conception doctrine. It is also found in many Peninsular breviaries, mostly originating in the kingdom of Aragon, like Lerida and Urgell. How the Eve-Mary parallel originated and how it is used in poetry is discussed in Chapter 9.

Offices from Navarre (ACP 19, 20, 21) are exceptional in that they continue to foreground the conception of St Anne using the apocryphal stories as the readings at the Conception office, as mentioned earlier, even in manuscripts copied in the late fifteenth century. All Conception offices emphasize the importance of Christ's and, therefore, Mary's genealogy and use the *Liber generationis* as the Gospel reading for both the feast of the Nativity and that of the Conception. The influence of Apocryphal Gospel stories is discussed in the final chapter.

The presence of liturgies in breviaries from the 1330s onward shows that the Conception had been adopted in the Peninsula and the variety of types of office shows that the feast was developing and changing in the period. However, the absence of Conception offices in any given diocese does not indicate the opposite. Many codices have been lost, even in the twentieth century, through the vagaries of war and, given Spain's unique problems in the last few centuries, it is surprising that any survive. Only heroic action in the face of advancing troops has saved some of the most important for determining the history of the feast in the medieval period.

Conclusion

I have distinguished four types of authority expressed through liturgies. The earliest was the use of the miraculous institution of the feast, with its own emphasis on divine, royal, and ecclesiastical authority. Apocryphal stories, in the shape of a liturgy of St Anne, continued to be used in some dioceses. By the fifteenth century, liturgies placed greater emphasis on Council pronunciations and, by the end of the century, liturgies adopted the practice of using citations from Fathers of the Church. Old Testament prefigurations of Mary which emphasized her purity, her beauty, or her association with creation, became associated with the liturgies. Miraculous emphasis was never entirely abandoned

in the Peninsula and remained the preferred option for office readings in some areas, notably La Seu d'Urgell.

Liturgy is one of the principal mediators of authority. It was a vehicle for transmitting information about the feast and its nature, as well as underlining its divine origins. In this way, its role was to stimulate public devotion. It was also a way of providing knowledge about new types of authority: theological arguments from key supporters of the doctrine or statements taken from the Council of Basle. It provided a shorthand way of hearing key theological statements considered to be in support of the Conception, particularly for those not in holy orders.

It also provided an annual reminder of principal biblical texts used to defend the doctrine. Texts were incorporated which emphasized the battle between Mary and the serpent, the contrast between Eve and Mary, Mary's beauty, and her unblemished nature. Many breviaries continued to emphasize themes from the Apocryphal Gospels, whilst the most frequently found bible verse used throughout the day in the office is one which stresses her origins and God's role in preparing her for her role: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways'. These same texts were repeated as antiphons and as responses in the office for the day ensuring that the faithful, among them the poets, had the opportunity to hear the Old Testament prefigurations of Mary and her Immaculate nature.

This chapter contributes to understanding of one aspect of authority and how it was mediated but before taking the concept further it will be important to discover the nature of the debate to which the celebration of the feast gave rise. I discuss the way in which different types of authority were used in support of the doctrine and also look at how attitudes to authority changed by the end of the fifteenth-century.

CHAPTER THREE

GOOD AND EVIL: THEOLOGICAL DISPUTE OVER MARY

The debate over Mary's Conception, which began in the twelfth century, took as its basis the nature of sin, one of the main pillars of the Christian faith. The debate came about once the feast had been established, causing theologians to stop and ponder exactly what such a feast might celebrate. Following the teaching of St Augustine of Hippo (354–430), it was believed that the corruptive power of original sin was passed from parent to child as a physical fault. Theologians' understanding of the nature of human generation, based on the rediscovery of Aristotle's theories, combined St Augustine's teaching on the transmission of original sin with the theories of physiognomy absorbed from ancient philosophy. In the universities it was believed that, whilst the father provided the seed and the form which would develop into the child, it was the mother who provided the matter with which the new being was nourished (Allen 1985: I, 396). The idea that the human matter to be used in the development of the Christ foetus, should have been under the dominion of sin came to be seen as abhorrent, and increased the desire felt by medieval theologians to separate Mary's flesh from any such corruption. Their appreciation of the gulf which separated Mary's flesh from that of the rest of womankind entailed creating some mechanism for differentiating her. Conception without original sin would set Mary's flesh definitively aside from corrupt flesh, making her the one pure human being from whom God's Son would take flesh.

First Controversies over the Conception Feast

The first flurry of activity in defence of the feast occurred in Winchester in 1127 or 1128. All its defenders had connections with St Anselm. He wrote in opposition to the celebration of the Conception of the Virgin in *Cur Deus Homo*: 'Virgo tamen ipsa […] est in iniquitatibus concepta, et in peccatis concepit eam mater ejus, et cum originali peccato nata

est' (PL 158, col. 416) [The Virgin herself (…) was conceived in sin, and in sin her mother conceived her, and she was born with original sin], nevertheless, his teaching on original sin was an important stimulus to thinking on the Immaculate Conception. His secretary, Eadmer (1064–1124), his nephew, Anselm the Younger (1036–1086), abbot of Bury St Edmonds, and Osbert of Clare (d. c.1158), prior of Westminster, all defended the new feast. The first known treatise written in its defence, the *Tractatus de conceptione B. Mariae Virginis* [Treatise on the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary] (PL 159, 301–318), was English, probably written to justify the introduction of the feast at Bury St Edmunds (Lamy 2000: 35, 39–42). The manuscript quickly began to circulate under the name of St Anselm, although its author was Eadmer. Its association with St Anselm gave it authority and ensured that its arguments would be noted across Christendom. It constituted 'a new level of thinking, at once theological and devotional, simpler than that of Eadmer's successors but undoubtedly more sophisticated than what had gone before' (Stacpoole 1982: 227).

In the first part of the treatise, Eadmer argues that the feast should be celebrated, since he does not consider it 'contra fidem esse' [against the faith], even though there is no mention of it in Scripture. He holds the doctrine to be consonant with Mary's dignity as Mother of God: 'Quid enim major et excellentior aestimari debet conceptio futurae Matris Dei quam conceptio venientis in carne filii Dei?' [For what could be thought better and more excellent than the conception of the future Mother of God than the conception in her flesh of the forthcoming Son of God] (303D). He argues that, even in her conception, Mary was free from original sin because of her role in Christ's redemptive work (305B). His second argument relies on parity with John the Baptist and Jeremiah: 'Quis dicere audeat singulare totius saeculi propitiatiorium ac Filii Dei omnipotentis dulcissimum reclinatorium, mox in suae conceptionis exordio Spiritus sancti gratiae illustratione destitutum' [Who would dare to say that the singular propitiation for all the ages and sweet resting place for the Son of God was stripped of grace in her conception by the gift of the Holy Spirit from the very beginning] (305A). St Anselm had already described original sin as deprivation of original justice, with the effect of separating humankind from God (*Liber de conceptu virginali et originali peccato*, PL 158, 451–464). As St Anselm's disciple, Eadmer interpreted original sin as a lack of grace, 'gratiae […] destitutum' [stripped of grace], rather than a physical imperfection, transmitted at conception of the foetus. This state

could be called a sin, but differs from both personal sin and Adam's sin, which arose from conscious choice. According to St Anselm, inherited sin arose from natural necessity. By degrees, the influence of Eadmer's treatise started to change the face of mariology (Stacpoole 1982: 228).

The Conception feast spread to Bec in Normandy and, in 1140, the Canons of Lyon had instituted a feast in honour of the Conception of the Virgin Mary. It met with an angry, unsolicited response from St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) (Stiegman 2001: 129). His views on its nature are found in the letter to the Canons. He did not approve of the new feast on three counts, maintaining that the celebration of such a feast was not recognized by the Church, nor approved by reason, nor recommended by ancient tradition:

> Unde miramur satis, quid visum fuerit hoc tempore quibusdam vestrum voluisse mutare colorem optimum, novam inducendo celebritatem, quam ritus Ecclesiae nescit, non probat ratio, non commendat antiqua traditio. (*Ad canonicos Lugdunenses: de conceptione Sanctae Mariae* [To the Canons of Lyon: On the Conception of St Mary], PL 182, col. 333 A)
>
> [Wherefore I cannot but wonder that there should have been among you some who wished to sully this splendid fame of your Church by introducing a new Festival, a rite which the Church knows nothing of, and which reason does not prove, nor ancient tradition hand down to us.]
>
> (Mabillon 1889–1896: 512)

St Bernard reacted declaring that the feast was a celebration of embraces of concupiscence. He was also shocked by the idea that the Church could celebrate the act of conception. His opposition to the new doctrine stems from how he understands the nature of transmission of original sin and from the way he associates the Conception feast with the *conceptio activa* of the Virgin. That is to say he cannot distinguish, as some later theologians do, between the actions of the parents and the resultant conception of the child:

> Unde ergo conceptionis sanctitas? An dicitur sanctificatione praeventa, quatenus jam sancta conciperetur, ac per hoc sanctus fuerit et conceptus; quemadmodum sanctificata jam in utero dicitur, et sanctus consequeretur et ortus? […] An forte inter amplexus maritales sanctitas se ipsi conceptioni immiscuit, ut simul et sanctificata fuerit, et concepta? (PL 182, col. 335C)

> [Whence then the sanctity of the conception? Shall it be said that Mary was so prevented by grace that, being holy before being conceived, she was therefore conceived without sin; […]. Or perhaps, when her parents were so united, holiness was mingled with the conception itself so that she was at once conceived and sanctified?]
>
> (Mabillon 1889–1896: 516)

It is important to realize that St Bernard's opposition to the Conception feast did not derive from any desire to dishonour Mary, but instead had its roots in two dogmas, which he thought more important than the new doctrine. He subscribed to the Augustinian view of original sin and also to Christ's supreme holiness, both of which he believed to be jeopardized by the new feast:

> The point was that the Virgin Birth of Christ signifies the absolute exception, the complete uniqueness that sets Christ apart, elevating Him above others born of woman who were sanctified or predestined from the maternal womb. It was certainly the intuition of an analogous relationship that impeded the theologians of the scholastic age from attributing the Immaculate Conception to Mary. (Miegge 1955: 120)

Paradoxically, St Bernard's thinking made an enormous contribution to later teaching in favour of the Conception doctrine. First, his poetic language in his laudatory sermons was influential for his fellow Cistercians and spread across Europe as the Order expanded rapidly. His spirituality contributed in no small way to the creation of a climate of Marian piety, in which a doctrine like the Immaculate Conception could flourish. Defending it was construed as honouring Mary.

Second, St Bernard broke entirely new ground in his defence of *sanctificatio in utero*, the sanctification of the Virgin in her mother's womb. Bernard based his arguments for Mary's holy birth on the existence of the feast of the Nativity, pointing out that, since the Church cannot celebrate an unholy feast, Mary's birth must of necessity be holy.[1] Although his Augustinian view of original sin prevented Bernard from ranging himself with the supporters of the Conception, his arguments in favour of the Nativity paved the way for subsequent defence of the

[1] St Bernard discusses the point as follows: 'Sed est ortum Virginis didici nihilominus in Ecclesia, et ab Ecclesia indubitanter habere festivum atque sanctum; firmissime cum Ecclesia sentiens in utero eam accepisse ut sancta prodiret' (333C) [But the origin of the Virgin has been taught nowhere in the Church, and there would certainly be a holy celebration by the Church; firmly sensing with the Church that she received it in the womb so that she could be born holy].

Conception. Finally, when an important cleric like St Bernard made a virulent attack on the feast, he unwittingly raised its profile.

A new controversy then arose which lasted for some thirty years. It was based on a treatise refuting Bernard's position and on an exchange of letters between Nicholas of St Albans and Bernard's disciple, Peter of Celles (1183-?) (Talbot 1954; Mŏdric 1956: 23–24; 1978: 56–82; Lamy 2000: 81–88). Lucas Mŏdric gives the following summary of Nicholas's defence of the doctrine: 'Nicholaus intelligere nequit quomodo concupiscentia existere possit sine sui motu, et viceversa, quomodo sentiri possit, si est ligata; unde adhuc altius problema, utrum nempe inveniatur in Virgine causa peccati an non, seu utrum existat in ea talis defectus ut eam ducere possit ad peccatum actuale' [Nicholas did not understand how concupiscence without its motive could exist, and, on the other hand, how it could be felt, if it were bound; this led to another problem, whether cause for sin was found in the Virgin or whether there existed in her such a defect as would lead to it] (1956: 20). The crux of the difference between the two monks was the Virgin's relationship to the universal dominion of sin. In Nicholas's view, because her flesh became Christ's, the Virgin must have been in the same state of original perfection as Adam and Eve before the Fall. Peter of Celles argued that there must have been a degree of imperfection in Mary. He did so to ensure that she was not brought onto a par with the perfect Redeemer. He denounced the doctrine as being murky like the English weather and sought to ensure that such a doctrine should not creep across the Channel and start to be celebrated in France. Unfortunately for Peter, it already had.

Scholastic Teachers and the Conception Feast

By the end of the thirteenth century, the doctrine was being taken seriously enough in France for it to be discussed by theologians at the University of Paris. Like Peter, they rejected it. Jean de Pouilly (d. 1192), later Cardinal Bishop of Liège, writing around 1310, could still affirm that no doctor whose work had been published in Paris, had ever defended the doctrine. There were major reasons why Parisian theologians were opposed to the new doctrine:

> On a parlé de leur connaissance imparfaite de la doctrine des Pères, de l'influence exercée sur eux par Pierre Lombard et par S. Bernard, de la difficulté qu'ils éprouvaient de concilier l'exemption du péché originel

> avec quelques vérités incontestables admises par tous, comme le dogme de la Rédemption universelle, la génération de Marie selon les lois communs de la nature, la pureté incomparable du Christ. (Guimaraens 1952: 181)
>
> [Their imperfect knowledge of the Fathers has been discussed, as well as the influence on them of Peter Lombard and St Bernard, and also the difficulty they had in reconciling freedom from original sin with other incontrovertible truths to which all subscribed, such as the dogma of universal redemption, keeping the generation of Mary within the laws of nature, the purity of Christ which could not be matched by any.]

First, none of the Fathers of the Church had specifically written about Mary's Conception. Second, the great Peter Lombard (1100–1160?), on whose work scholasticism was constructed, did not mention it. Peter supported the traditional view that Mary was sanctified or purified by the Holy Spirit at the time of the Annunciation (*Sententiarum Libri* Quattuor, III, d.3, c.1, PL 192, cols 760–761). Finally, St Bernard, along with other major theologians, addressed it but opposed it. These three factors were enough to convince university teachers until the end of the thirteenth century that there was no possibility of reconciling the Conception with the doctrine of original sin to which all subscribed. Such reticence was further compounded by the opposition of the most respected theologians of the day: St Albert the Great (c.1206–1280), St Bonaventure (1221–1274), Alexander of Hales (d.1245), and Aquinas. Lamy points to their contributions as well as those of Jean de la Rochelle (d.1245) and William of Middleton (active 1245–1253), both disciples of Alexander of Hales. However, theologians did address the question of Mary's sanctification and how and when it had taken place. The possibilities were fourfold: before conception, at conception, between conception and animation, and after animation (Lamy 2000: 243–257).

Aquinas considers the question of Mary's sanctification in his *Summa theologiae*, arguing more systematically than St Bernard but echoing his conclusions (1969: 4–118). Although he was opposed to sanctifying Mary's conception, his teaching, paradoxically, made some contributions to advancing it. He, like his contemporaries, sets out the question in several ways: whether Mary was sanctified before she was conceived, whether she was sanctified at the time of conception, the position rejected by St Bernard, or whether she was sanctified after conception but before animation, and, finally, whether she was sanctified at the

moment of infusion of her rational soul (Lamy 2000: 246–257). Significantly, it meant that he expounded the opposite points of view before selecting the last option.

Arguing that Mary's sanctification was like that of the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 40, 31–32), which was sanctified when it was finished, his view was that she was not sanctified until she was perfectly complete, in other words, when she had a rational soul (Lamy 2000: 253). Although Mary's Nativity is not mentioned in Scripture, he believed it possible to deduce that the Virgin Mary had been born without sin. He argued that the Virgin was sanctified after the infusion of her rational soul (animation), but before birth. He then rejected the idea of Mary's conception without sin, echoing St Bernard's views on the subject. His caution sprang from his concern about upholding major doctrines and adhering firmly both to Augustine's doctrine of original sin and to belief in the uniqueness of Christ. Because he posed the whole question in terms of sanctification, he could not accept that it could occur except in a rational being. He concluded that sanctification must have occurred at animation. He never posed the question of whether Mary might have been preserved from original sin: 'Culpa non potest emundari nisi per gratiam: cujus subjectum est sola creatura rationalis. Et ideo ante infusionem animae rationalis beata Virgo sanctificata non fuit' [Sin cannot be cleansed except by grace: and only rational creatures are subject to it. So, before the infusion of her rational soul, the Virgin was not sanctified] (*Summa theologiae*, Lib.III.27.art.2. resp., 1969: 10–11).

He accepted the existence of a Nativity feast as evidence that Mary was sanctified in her mother's womb but did not follow his own line of argument for the Conception: 'Nec tamen per hoc festum conceptionis celebratum datur intelligi quod in sua conceptione fuerit sancta' [It should not however be thought that through the celebration of this Conception feast that her Conception was holy] (Lib.III.27.art.2.resp.3). The influence of St Bernard's conclusions is very much in evidence. The long-standing practice of celebrating the feast and the equivocal attitude of Rome caused Aquinas, and other university teachers, some difficulty (Lamy 2000: 293–306).

Like other opponents of the Conception doctrine, Aquinas made several important contributions to its terms of reference. For example, his insistence that the gift of grace, which was accorded to Mary in her sanctification, was a preservative, preventative grace was later incorporated into the definition, proving a useful aid in determining the mechanics of preservation from original sin. Defenders of the privilege

had frequently failed to recognize that Mary was in need of redemption and his argument that grace was a gift to Mary from her Son and a special privilege was also used in the definition:

> Et ideo melius videtur dicendum quod per santificationem in utero non fuit sublatus Virgini fomes secundum essentiam, sed remansit ligatus: non quidem per actum rationis suae, sicut in viris sanctis […] hoc enim speciale privilegium Christi fuit; sed per gratiam abundantem quam in sanctificatione recepit; et etiam perfectius per divinam providentiam sensualitatem ejus ab omni inordinato motu prohibentem. (Lib. III.27.3, 1969: 18–19).
>
> [It would seem better to say that in the sanctification in the womb the inflammation of sin was not removed in essence from the Virgin but was rendered harmless. Of course this was not achieved by an act of her reason, as in holy people (…), but rather by the abundance of grace given to her in her sanctification. And still more perfectly by divine providence keeping her sensuality from all inordinate movements.]

Later generations saw how the uniqueness of Christ's origin could be preserved, where Aquinas had been unable to reconcile the Conception with the doctrine of original sin. He made a further important contribution to its development. According to his theory of 'ampliorem […] gratiam' [a fuller grace], Mary was preserved from all sin, venial and mortal, after her sanctification (Lib.III.27.art.6. resp.1). He uses the biblical verse '*Tota pulchra es amica mea*' from the Song of Songs (4.7) to illustrate the freedom of the Virgin from actual sins (Lib.III.27.art.4.resp.1). The verse would later be used by the immaculists to indicate freedom from all sin, original, mortal, and venial (see below, Chapter 7).

Despite his staunch opposition to the doctrine, Aquinas is included amongst its supporters by liturgists in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He is named in the readings in Juan de Segovia's Conception office and in Leonardo de Nogarolis's (Ricossa 1994: 64; BC 1043, fol. 15^{r}).

The teaching of Aquinas has been developed at some length, not because it contains any new perspective on the Conception, but rather because his ideas were to have a major influence on the ensuing debate. Initial division on the doctrine was national, Britain versus France, Oxford versus Paris. It was only in the century after Aquinas that the division was to become congregational. When new ways of addressing the question were developed in the early fourteenth century, the Dominican Order united behind their great theologian and defended his views.

By the time John Duns Scotus (d.1308) came to teach the doctrine in Paris, in 1304, acknowledgement of the belief had gained a little ground and importantly the nature of the debate shifted away from justification of the celebration of the feast to discussion of when the Conception was believed to have taken place (Tavard 1992: 216). Scotus was preceded in Paris by Henry of Ghent, who taught that the Virgin was sanctified immediately after the first moment of her conception. Lamy discusses Henry's distinction on the moment of conception and the problems it raises (2000: 306–323). Guimaraens comments that: 'Le Docteur Solonnel y admet [à la q.13 de son Quodl.XV] comme possible et même probable que la Sainte Vierge fut sanctifiée immédiatement après le premier instant de son existence. […] Tous les auteurs qui abordèrent le problème de la conception examinent cette opinion de Henri de Gand pour la rejeter ou l'embrasser' [The Solemn Doctor admits in the Q.13 of his Quodlibet XV that it is possible and even probable that the Holy Virgin was sanctified after the first instant of her life. All the authors who deal with the problem of the conception examine Henry of Ghent's opinion and accept or reject it] (1952: 194). Henry's solution to the problem lay in the way he separated the physical act from the moment of conception when matter began to be configured in human form. He was then able to argue that, in her parents' act she was conceived in original sin, and that this was separate to the moment of conception, when the matter which formed her was sanctified. Henry distinguished her conception by God from her human conception and because placed the moment of divine conception in the same instant. To do so he used the analogy of the bean striking the mill stone which, in the same instant, jumps back (Tavard 1992: 209). His ideas were roundly rejected by numerous Parisian teachers, including Godefroid de Fontaines, John of Paris, Gilles de Rome, and Guillaume de Godin. Allan B. Wolter (1999: 4–7) describes the nature of Henry's Quodlibet debate in Paris, in which students would pose questions. It would have been reported in Oxford, where Scotus was a bachelor student.

In Scotus's Oxford milieu there was a 'Geist […] der in der nach Anselmus orientierten Franziskanerschule von Oxford herrschte' [a spirit which reigned in the Anselmian Franciscan school of Oxford]. Scotus's mentor, William of Ware (active 1270–1300), had taught the doctrine of Mary Immaculate (Emmen 1965: 363–394, Wolter 1999: 16, n.43). Aquilin Emmen draws out various similarities between Ware and Scotus, showing how Scotus had clarified the imperfect thinking of

his predecessor. Allan B. Wolter and Blane O'Neill also consider that Scotus perfected Ware's thinking (1993: 74). Lamy, however, argues that Ware was the pupil of Scotus (2000: 342–370).

Scotus is commonly called the first defender of the Immaculate Conception, even though he does not precisely affirm it but rather puts it forward as one of three possible alternatives available to God (Amorós Paya 1956: 301; Lamy 2000: 371–378). It has been generally considered that he lectured at Oxford from 1297 to 1301 and reworked his original lecture notes when he lectured in Paris from 1305 to 1307. Lamy challenges the belief that Scotus engaged in a face-to-face dispute over the Immaculate Conception in Paris, in which he challenged his opponents in person, forever changing the course of immaculism. She argues strongly that it is a myth (2000: 382–389). Michael Bihl contends that contemporaries regarded Scotus as a more definite immaculist than shown by his published works (1906: 454–469). The contradiction between the way in which Scotus was held to be a defender of the Conception and the cautious tone of his written questions on it is answered by Lamy's argument that his activities and views were repackaged by his supporters. Scotus argues Mary could either have been preserved from original sin, allowed to remain in sin for one instant only (Henry of Ghent's proposal), or have been allowed to remain in sin for a period of time. Scotus, deferring to Church and Scriptural authority, tentatively opts for the first possibility as the most likely: 'Videtur probabile quod excellentius est tribuere Mariae' [in all probability the best of the three should be attributed to Mary] (Lib III. d.3.q.1). Wolter and Blane provide a good analysis of the structure of Scotus's argument (1993: 74–81).

His Conception theory is an important milestone in the history of the doctrine. At a time when it was held in scant regard at the University of Paris, he managed to defuse the two main sources of objection which generally had prevented its recognition: the universality of original sin and the doctrine of Christ's uniqueness. Scotus shows that:

> Para la Santa Virgen este acto perfectísimo de mediación se convierte en una redención mucho más excelente y sublime que la común: los méritos de la Pasión de Cristo fueron ya en la mente divina previstos y aceptados en orden a […] María. (Amorós Paya 1956: 295)
>
> [In the case of the holy Virgin this perfect act of mediation becomes a sublime and much more excellent redemption than the one commonly applied: the merits of the passion of Christ were already present in the mind of God and justified her.]

Redemptive grace, operative in the Virgin's case, was activated because of the merits of Christ. Scotus adds a new dimension, that of God foreseeing the Passion. Preservation from original sin or pre-redemption, a more perfect mode of redemption, can then be perceived as a positive addition to Christ's uniqueness, rather than detracting from it. Scotus's concept of perfect redemption is dependent on St Anselm's view of original sin as a deprivation of grace, rather than a physiological marker. Scotus's influence on the subsequent development of the doctrine led the Conception to be termed '*opinio Scoti*' in the first half of the fourteenth century and Scotus to be accorded the title Doctor of the Immaculate Conception. The opposing view became known as '*opinio Thomae*' shortly afterwards (O'Connor 1958: 212). Thus, the stage was set for the ensuing conflict, which lasted well over a century, between two rival schools of thought.

Peter Aureoli or Oriol (1280–1322), one of Scotus's disciples, accorded the title of *Doctor facundus* by the Church, because of his eloquence, has the status of being the first of the Schoolmen to compose an entire treatise devoted to the Immaculate Conception. His *Tractatus de conceptione Sanctae Mariae* [Treatise on the Conception of Mary] was written to defend his preaching from Dominican criticism (Di Lella 1955: 146–158). In it, Aureoli provides a useful definition of what should be understood as conception. He distinguishes various types: 'pro semine conceptione' [carnal intercourse], 'pro formatione seu formati corporis figuratione et lineatione' [foetal existence before the infusion of the rational soul], and 'pro infusione animae rationalis' [animation]. Aureoli, following Aristotle, believed that animation took place on the fortieth day after conception for males and the eightieth day after conception for females (Di Lella 1955: 149, n. 10). In his final distinction, on the infusion of the rational soul, Aureoli discusses whether Mary ought to have contracted original sin and whether she did:

> For it is certain that Mary contracted original sin and was a daughter of wrath *de jure* […] because she was generated from the intercourse of husband and wife […]. she contracted original sin and was a daughter of wrath *de facto* is doubtful and uncertain. (Di Lella 1955: 150)

He concludes that Mary was under the dominion of the serpent, but that she was prevented from contracting original sin, as she should have, by the operation of divine grace. Aureoli includes a final series of arguments based on contemporary ecclesiastical practice in celebrating the Conception feast, in much the same way that Bernard and

Aquinas had argued in favour of the Nativity. He interprets the silence of the Church hierarchy as positive and, even, favourable. Aureoli was far more overt in his defence of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception than Scotus.

Institutional Support for the Doctrine

Franciscan support for the doctrine was gradually rallying across Europe and opponents of the doctrine were becoming more vehement in their denial. The first half of the fourteenth century witnessed a gradual movement to acceptance of the doctrine in major centres of learning like Oxford and Paris. Whole kingdoms, like Aragon, declared their support for it. The University of Paris provides evidence of how the shift occurred over the period of about fifty years. When Scotus had preached, majority opinion was maculist, in other words it held that the truth was that Mary was cleansed at animation and had been stained by sin for a short time. Yet, by 1362, when two Dominican friars, Jean l'Escacier and Jacques de Bosco, preached that the Immaculate Conception was false and heretical (O'Connor 1958: 223), they were ordered to retract by the authorities. The crisis was contained. Jean de Pouilly characterized the doctrine as heretical, voicing the first realization that the traditional view was under threat from the new teaching. The shift in general opinion on the doctrine is reinforced by de Pouilly's words: 'Cum igitur illud quod est contra omnen scripturam non possit pro opinione probabile teneri, imo, in quantum est contra sacram scripturam debet haereticum reputari' [When something is against all Scripture it cannot be held probable by opinion, but rather, in so far as it is against sacred Scripture, it should be called heretical] (*Quodlibet* 3.q.4; cited in Guimaraens 1952–1953: 175). His arguments took account of Scotus's argument from probability (Lamy 2000: 389–391).

A more serious crisis shook the University of Paris in 1376. Juan de Montesono or Monzón, a Catalan Dominican, scandalized the university with his *Vesperis*, an inaugural lecture presented on the eve of graduation. Fourteen proposals were extracted from Monzón's thesis and denounced. Four of them dealt with the Immaculate Conception:

> Non omnem hominem praeter Christum contrahere ab Adam peccatum originale est expresse contra fidem. Beatam Mariam Virginem et Dei genetricem non contraxisse peccatum originale est expresse contra fidem. Tantum est contra sacram Scripturam unum hominem esse

> exemptum a peccato originali, praeter Christum, sicut si decem homines de facto ponerentur exempti. Magis est expresse contra sacram Scripturam beatam Virginem non esse conceptam in peccato originali quam asserere ipsam fuisse simul beatam et viatricem ab instanti suae conceptionis vel sanctificationis. (cited in Le Bachelet 1909–1922: 1084)
>
> [That not every person contracted original sin with Adam, except Christ, is expressly against the faith. That the Virgin Mary, mother of God, did not contact original sin is expressly against the faith. It is just as against the sacred Scripture for one person to be exempt from original sin, as if it were written that ten were in fact exempt. It is more against sacred Scripture that the Virgin was not conceived in original sin than to hold she was at the same time blessed and a pilgrim through life at the moment of her sanctification.]

Monzón's lack of circumspection in declaring that it was 'expresse contra fidem' [totally against the faith], led to his downfall. The Faculty pronounced that each of the propositions relating to Mary should be withdrawn, terming Monzón's propositions 'scandalizantes et pias aures offendentes' [scandalous and offensive to pious ears]:

> Nuper delatum est viris venerabilibus et discretis Decano et facultati theologiae per nonnullos fide dignos Baccalarios et scolares, regulares et seculares, in dicta facultate quod Magister Johannes de Montesono, mag. in theologia, O.F. Praed., multas praepositiones scandalizantes et pias aures offendentes in suis Vesperis et sua quaestione de Resumpta, asseruit et publice dogmatizavit in scolis fratres praedicatorum parisiensium, supra quibus matura et diligenti deliberatione habita per solemnes magistros deputatos ex parte dictae facultatis, ut moris est, nec non per singulos magistros ad partem necdum semel sed pluries, dicti Decanus et facultas declaraverunt […] quattuordecim propositiones per eundem Magistrum in scolis publice dogmatizatas, zelo fidei et scandali vitandi, per eundem Magistrum fore publice revocandas sub forma inferius contenta.
>
> [For it has recently been brought to the attention of the Dean, and of the Faculty of Theology, venerable and discrete men, by a number of worthy Bachelors and scholars both regular and secular in the Faculty, that Master John Monzón, a Dominican, Master in Theology, has asserted and publicly argued many propositions which are scandalous and offensive to pious ears in his Vespers and in his Summary session at the Dominican School in Paris. On which with mature and diligent customary deliberation by the masters chosen by the said Faculty, as is the custom, and not by individual masters but by many of them, the Dean and the Faculty declared that fourteen of the propositions by the aforementioned Master taught publicly in the School, to avoid scandal and with faith's zeal, should be publicly retracted by the Master in the form outlined below.]

Monzón did not appear to answer the charges and was denounced to the Chancellor, Pierre d'Orgemont (d.1429) (Doncoeur 1907). In desperation, the summons was read in Monzón's empty room in the Dominican friary and pinned to Church doors throughout Paris. Monzón had fled to Avignon to appeal to the Pope for his support but, when this did not appear forthcoming, he slipped over the border into Aragon. He was excommunicated on 27 January 1387 at the Pontifical Court of Avignon. He had another chance to appeal to a different Pope in a period where schism split the Roman Church, because in Aragon, he came under the jurisdiction of the Roman Pope.

The controversy aroused reveals how much passion was displayed on both sides of the widening divide. It also shows the progress made towards the doctrine being universally acceptable during the course of the fourteenth century within theological circles. Monzón's actions also led to the promulgation of a decree forbidding anyone to teach at the university, unless they agreed to condemn his fourteen propositions. Since the Dominicans could not condemn Monzón's propositions, they were effectively excluded from the University of Paris until 1403: 'Decrevimus concordi deliberatione predictos fratres ad nostrum consortium de nostra speciali gratia recipere et reintegrare sicut olim fuerant, priusquam lites iste moveretur, et de facto recipimus et reintegramus' [We decree in accord with our deliberation that the aforementioned friars receive a special grace and rejoin our ranks, in the same conditions as they had, before this conflict was brought into being, and we receive and integrate them again] (Denifle 1889–1897: IV [781], 56–57). The reinstatement of the Dominicans was on condition that 'nullusque fratrum aut alius dogmatizaret aut legeret aut predicaret oppositum' [no friar or any other should hold forth or read or preach against (the conception)]. The university had become an immaculist stronghold by the end of the fourteenth century, a sign of which was that a great many immaculist sermons were preached.[2]

[2] Two of the sermons were those preached by Juan Vidal (1387 or 1388) and Jean Gerson, the Chancellor of the University (1401). Both took as their text '*Tota pulchra es, amica mea*' (see below, Chapter 7). The dates are those given by O'Connor (1958: 226).

Catalan Theologians and the Immaculate Conception

Not all Catalan theologians taught and preached against the Immaculate Conception and their work shows that, in the kingdom of Aragon, they were very much aware of the new developments in Parisian theology. In 1298, just a few years before Scotus, the Majorcan theologian and Franciscan tertiary, Ramon Llull (1232–1316), had defended the Immaculate Conception in Paris with his treatise *Disputatio Eremitae et Raymundi: super aliquibus dubiis quaestionibus sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi* [The Disputation Between the Hermit and Ramon: on some Doubtful Questions in the Sentences of Peter Lombard], although his lack of status at the university meant his teachings did not make much of an impact there.[3] He made a number of positive statements about the Conception of Mary in his many works. Llull's reputation as an immaculist derives in great part from books now discredited as being written by him, the *Liber de benedicta tu* [Book of Blessed art thou] and the *Liber de immaculate Beate Virginis conceptione* [Book of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin], probably written about a hundred years later by Raymond Astruch de Courtielles. In his *Disputatio Eremitae et Raymundi* [Disputation between the Hermit and Ramon], Llull comments on various elements of the question, including how Mary was predestined to be Mother of God, arguing that, because sin and God are incompatible, her flesh could never have been corrupted by actual or original sin.[4] He also includes a number of arguments about the fittingness of Mary's conception being without sin. Llull's approach to the sanctification of the Virgin is discussed by Lamy, who repeats Bon-

[3] Guimaraens gives brief details of this work by Llull (1952: 202). Llull's influence on the development of the doctrine in his native land, particularly the influence of his followers on the monarchy, is discussed by Fernando Domínguez Reboiras: 'Hom s'ha de preguntar si va ser el lul·lisme la causa de l'extrema i militant posició immaculista de la Corona de Aragó i no més aviat un efecte d'aquella' [One has to ask the question whether Lullism was the reason for the extreme militant immaculist standpoint of the crown of Aragon rather than an effect of it] (1990: 11–43, 23, n.36). Lamy (2000: 336) also subscribes to this view.

[4] 'Nisi beata Virgo fuisset disposita quod Filius Dei de ipsa assumeret carnem, scilicet quod non esset corrupta, nec in aliquo peccato sive actuali sive originali, Filius Dei non potuisset ab ipsa assumere carnem, cum Deus et peccatum non possint concordari in aliquo subiecto' [Unless the blessed Virgin were prepared for the Son of God to take flesh from her, in other words, that she were not corrupted either by any actual or original sin, then the Son of God could not have taken flesh from her, for God and sin cannot exist together in any person] (1906–1950: 84).

nefoy's assessment of his argument for the purification of the Virgin, assessing it as 'semi-maculisme' (2000: 331–336, 334, n.32). His arguments include the love between Mother and Son and one in which the original innocence of Adam and Eve calls for an equal degree of original innocence from the Second Adam and Eve (Lamy 2000: 333). The response to objections raised by the hermit includes the imaging of God as the supreme builder, which was to have enormous influence in literary treatment of the theme. I discuss the links between this image and creation further in Chapter 8.

Another defender of the Immaculate Conception in the kingdom of Aragon, this time in Valencia, was Pedro Pascual or Paschasius (Lamy 2000: 326). His *Disputa contra los Jueus sobre la fe catholica* [Dispute against the Jews about the Catholic Faith], written in Catalan, discusses the Incarnation and he argues in favour of the Immaculate Conception that Mary would not have been acceptable but would have incurred God's wrath had she been conceived in original sin:

> Lo peccat original vench en hom per desobedienca, perque caech en ira de Déu […]. Donchs si la Verge Maria es conçebuda en pecat original, aurem a dir que algun temps fon en la ira de Déu, ço que nos deu dir pas, ne creure. (1907–1908: II, 224)
>
> [Original sin comes into man through disobedience, because he falls into God's wrath. So, if the Virgin Mary were conceived in original sin, we will have to say that for some time she was in God's wrath, which we should neither say nor believe.]

Bernard de Deo, a Franciscan, explicitly refers to Parisian authority in support of the Immaculate Conception (Guimaraens 1952–1953: 169, n.178; Lamy 2000: 341–342).[5] His mention of the new authorities in its favour shows how quickly account was taken of the change of opinion in the kingdom of Aragon. The adoption of the doctrine by Bernard, a preacher, rather than a theologian, serves as an illustration of the way in which the Franciscans were uniquely placed to stimulate vast numbers of the faithful to support for the doctrine through their sermons (Ellington 2001: 50–51). The Dominicans, a preaching Order,

[5] 'Maria […] fuit sine culpa et amaritudine peccati, non solum actualis et venialis sed etiam originalis, ut volunt multi doctores, de quorum numero est magister Johannes Scoti, Garro, magister Hugo et communiter alii doctores in theologia Parisius' [Mary was without blame and bitterness of sin, not only actual and venial but also original, as many doctors hold, among whose number is Master John Scotus, Ware, Master Hugh, and together all the other doctors in theology at Paris] (*Summa praedicabilium*, ACV, 141, fol. 140^{r}). See Ephrem Longpré (1932: 248).

had always catered for the elite, whilst the Franciscans had always reached a wider audience and knew how to expound even the most erudite scholastic doctrine in terms to which lay people could respond. Thus, the burning question of the privilege of Mary in her conception could do no other than pass from the university classroom to the pulpit, and be absorbed by the populace at large (Recio 1955: 108; Ellington 2001: 30–31).

Peter Thomas (1300–1350), a Barcelona scholar, accorded the title *Doctor invincibilis* by the Church, had enormous influence in Spain (Martí de Barcelona 1927). In his *Liber de originali innocentia Virginis Mariae* [Book on the Original Innocence of the Virgin Mary, he uses the pseudo-Anselmian idea that Mary is above the rest of creation and second only to God (1665: 257). Peter was a Scholastic, who, according to Ignatius Brady, had little influence outside Spain, but who probably studied in France, coming into contact with both Scotus's writing and possibly being taught by Aureoli (1955: 183, 176). Stefano Cecchin (1999: 520), however, regards his influence as 'notevole', without restricting it to Spain.

The Crown of Aragon and the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception

Opposition to the doctrine and the effective silencing of opponents were a feature of institutions other than the Sorbonne. Nicholas Eymerich (1320–1399), a native of Gerona and a noted opponent of the doctrine, having held the office of Inquisitor General for the kingdom of Aragon for most of the second half of the fourteenth century, was banished from the kingdom for his preaching against the Immaculate Conception and his attack on the Lullists. An edict was issued in 1393 by John I (1350–1396), proclaiming the king's adherence to the Immaculate Conception.[6] The penalty for preaching against it

[6] Firmiter credimus et tenemus quod praefatae huius sanctissimae Virginis sancta fuit penitus et electa conceptio. Nec amodo liceat imo fortiter prohibemus quibuslibet evangelizantibus sive praedicantibus verbum Dei quidquam exponere vel proferre in aliquam puritatis ipsius benedictae conceptionis iacturam.

[We firmly believe and hold that the conception of the most holy Virgin was holy and utterly elect. Nor should it be permitted—indeed we strongly prohibit it—to any evangelizers or preachers whatever of the word of God to expound or hold forth anything dismissive of the purity of her blessed conception.]

See also Faustino Gazulla (1905–1906) and José María Guix (1954).

was forcible ejection from convent, church, or house, and exile from Aragon. The kingdom became a haven of immaculism. The measures were extended to Gerona on 5 December 1394 (Le Bachelet 1909–1922: VII, 1088).

On the king's death, Eymerich returned to Aragon but was exiled again by John's successor, Martin I, the Humane (1356–1410). The king issued a further decree on 17 January 1398 in Zaragoza, following an attempt by the Dominicans to imprison a Franciscan, Fray Juan de Rota, for preaching in favour of the Immaculate Conception. Martin I finally proclaimed, in the decree of 26 April 1408, that those who preached against the doctrine were the enemies of the king.[7] Lamy sees the secular authority of the crown in Aragon as equivalent to the intervention of the University of Paris (2000: 593). By the early fifteenth century in the kingdom of Aragon, loyalty to the state was bound up with acceptance of the Immaculate Conception. Confessors and preachers to the kings were now exclusively drawn from the Franciscan Order, which gave them an important political advantage. Some aspects of the relationships between the Franciscans and the Crown are discussed by David J. Viera (1989). It was difficult for the maculist viewpoint to be heard, since its adherents were powerfully prevented from putting their case before the Church as a whole by threat of exile and charges of high treason.

John I, by his edicts of 1393–1394, and Martin I, who renewed and extended them, were both responsible for nurturing the Conception doctrine in the kingdom. Nevertheless, as X. Le Bachelet notes, the decrees provoked 'des écrits importants en réponse aux attaques d'Eymerich et de ses partisans' [important written declarations in response to the attacks of Eymerich and his cronies] (1909–1922: VII, 1088). These treatises in favour of the Immaculate Conception written in Aragon contributed to awareness of the doctrine in the kingdom in the fifteenth century and led to a flourishing of literary support for it.

Further royal action on behalf of the doctrine was taken in 1417 by Alfons V, the Magnanimous (1396–1488), who urged the Emperor Sigismund to promote the doctrine and Conception feast at the Council of Constance (O'Connor 1958: 228). In 1425, Alfons demanded a Council

[7] See the decree of Martin I (cited in part by Recio 1955: 112), which includes the following reference to the Order: 'Praedicatores seu pertinaciter obloquentes contra edictum hujus modi; pro inimicis nostris publicis reputentur' [The Preachers or those obstinately speaking against the edict in this way shall be held as our public enemies].

which would bring about universal acceptance of the doctrine. In 1431, the Council of Basle was called and the Immaculate Conception was discussed.

Castilian Theologians and the Conception

Royal activity was not confined to Aragon. By 1433, there is evidence that commitment to promotion of the doctrine had spread to the Castilian court, in that, at the Council of Basle, Juan de Segovia represented the university and also the King of Castile, Juan II (1405–1454).

John of Varennes was to exhort the Pope in Avignon, Benedict XIII (1328–1423) to convene a general Council to pronounce on the feast of the Conception, to institute a procession for it, and accord it a solemn octave (Lamy 2000: 591). At the same time, an anonymous cleric from Barcelona called upon the Holy Roman Emperor for a Council which would pronounce on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The doctrine was on the agenda. In 1435, a Canon of Bourges, Jean de Romiroy, presented a treatise on the Immaculate Conception, based on the text '*Tota pulchra es, amica mea et macula non est in te*' (See Chapters 6 and 7). His discourse included an appeal to the Fathers of the Council to discuss 'the canonization of her conception and the declaration that she was conceived without sin' (O'Connor 1958: 229). Juan de Segovia, in his *Septem Allegationes et totidem avisamenta* blamed the poor outcome of the Council on its failure to respond (Lamy 2000: 595, n.122; see also García Hernando 1958).

Juan de Torquemada, or Turrecremata (1388–1468), Master of the Sacred Palace, a Dominican and from 1439, a Cardinal, was asked to present a *summa* of all the arguments contrary to the doctrine (Lamy 2000: 596). This document was called *Tractatus de veritate conceptionis* [Treatise about the Truth of the Conception]. However, it was never presented at the Council. The papal legates left in 1437 and Torquemada left with them. The proceedings of the Council continued without papal mandate. Following a rather one-sided debate, the Immaculate Conception was defined.[8] Although the later sessions of the Coun-

[8] See the text of the decree published on 17 September 1438:

> Nos doctrinam illam disserentem gloriosam virginem Dei Genetricem Mariam praeveniente et operante divini numinis gratia singulari numquam subiacuisse originale peccato, sed immunem semper fuisse ab omni originali et actuali culpa,

cil were considered invalid, the proclamation had enormous impact on acceptance of the doctrine. Its defenders asserted that the Church had now spoken out definitively about the doctrine and that it was foolish and imprudent to continue to deny its validity (Pelikan 1996: 198).

The definition contributed to the spread of the doctrine in the countries which supported the Council. Amongst the countries which O'Connor considers to have witnessed such a spread in the doctrine is Aragon. In 1457, a provincial synod in Aragon ordained that the decree of Basle be observed on pain of excommunication (O'Connor 1958: 232). The response of Eastern Spain was, thus, more extreme than that of Castile. However, in Castile, there were clear plans to implement the decree of the Council of Basle, since Juan de Segovia wrote a Conception office, known outside Spain (Ricossa 1994: 46), thus proving that the Castilians were not far behind their Aragonese counterparts in their support for it.

Rome and the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception

From the very beginning of the controversy, participants in the debate had expected Rome to make a pronouncement.[9] Although the Conception feast had been celebrated in the Roman Curia from the mid-fourteenth century, appearing in the liturgical calendar and breviary, it was unofficial and private (Sericoli 1954: 17; O'Connor 1958: 275). Some Popes, like Innocent III (1160–1216) and Innocent V (1225–1276), pronounced sermons in favour of the doctrine before their accession but gave no indication of their support for it after, others like John XXII (1316–1334) did so whilst they were Pope. Many Popes were actively

> sanctamque et immaculatam ab omnibus catholicis approbandam fore tenendam et amplectendam definimus et declaramus, nullique de cetero licitum esse in contrarium praedicare seu docere. (Juan de Segovia 1857–1896: III.1, 364)
>
> [We define and declare that the doctrine, setting forth that the glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, by prevenient grace and the operation of the Holy Spirit, was never subject to original sin but was always immune from all original and actual sin, holy, and immaculate, should be approved by all Catholics and nothing contrary to it is allowable to be preached or taught.]

[9] St Bernard stated that he would abide by any papal decision (*Epistola* 174, PL 182, 336C) and Peter of Celles appealed to Rome (*Epistola* 171, PL 202, 616). Aquinas was clearly puzzled by Rome's silence (*Summa theologiae*, Lib.III.27.2.resp.3).

opposed to the doctrine (Sericoli 1954: 375). Clement VI (1342–1352) pronounced a sermon, '*Erunt signa in sole*' in support of the traditional view (Lamy 2000: 445–449). Even the wording of the liturgy, 'cuius insuper sensus erat vagus et indeterminatus, non stricte videlicet ac definitive immaculisticus' [whose meaning was vague and poorly determined, not strictly or definitively immaculist] (Sericoli 1954: 374), seemed to indicate a desire to maintain discretion towards both sides in the dispute.

The papacy of Sixtus IV (1471–1484) showed two shifts from the actions of previous Popes in respect of the Conception feast. Sixtus was the first to actively support it and this gave enormous impetus to its continuing development (De Fiores & Meo 1988: 618). He gave his approval to two offices for the feast day of 8 December. In *Cum praeexcelsa*, 1477, Nogarolis's office was approved and endowed with special indulgences. Its inauguration of a solemn octave for the feast marked an increase in prestige for what had previously been a minor feast day. Approval and indulgences were subsequently granted to the office of Bernardino de Bustis in *Libenter*, 1480. The nature of the feast became more overtly immaculist than it had been. Nogarolis's *Officium immaculatae conceptionis* (BC 1043) records fourteen uses of 'immaculata'. Both offices extract proof of the doctrine from Scripture, the Fathers, Doctors of the Church, and miracles. Sixtus IV also took a number of secondary steps which had an impact on its development. *Cum praeexcelsa* prevented either immaculists or maculists from calling their opponents heretical. Although this appears even-handed, it was a boon to the Franciscans, since the might of the Dominican Order was set around the weeding out of heresy. According to Sericoli, 'constat doctrinam de Immaculatae conceptionis per xystinas constitutiones maiorem saltem probabilitatem ac securitatem obtinuisse' [the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception gained the biggest leap forward in probability and security through the constitutions of Sixtus] (1954: 380).

The wording of *Grave nimis prior* of 1482 and *Grave nimis posterior* of 1483 both appeared neutral. Both decrees are a response to the degeneration of debate into bitter invective. Maculists are forbidden to call immaculists heretics 'sub excommunicationis poena'. The immaculists were to receive the same punishment, if they called the maculists heretics (Sericoli 1954: 379). Both *Grave nimis prior* and *Grave nimis posterior* gave further impetus to the immaculists. Firstly, it was the Dominicans and the Inquisition whose powers were being limited by the two constitutions. Secondly, the Pope touched on the possibility of future defi-

nition of the doctrine, thus adding weight to the immaculist position.[10] The impetus afforded to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception by both *Cum praexcelsa* and *Grave nimis* and the growing acceptance of the doctrine from the late fourteenth century to the late fifteenth century sets a backdrop to its study in literature.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how important authority figures within the Church from different countries became involved in debate over the Immaculate Conception and I have determined that, even though such people or institutions may not have recognized the doctrine, their thinking still advanced it. There were three major theological controversies over the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception: the one involving Bernard and the Canons, the one involving Scotus, and the one between the University of Paris and Monzón, but there were also a number of smaller skirmishes. In each of the major controversies, the need to maintain the universality of original sin was at stake for opponents of the new belief. If Mary were removed from the power of the serpent, in other words from the prison of original sin into which all humanity was locked, its force seemed to ebb away. If one human being did not need redemption, then it was believed that the saving power of Christ on the cross was also diminished. The now less than universal dominion of original sin seemed more easily conquerable.

To uphold the tradition that original sin had affected all without exception, bitter opposition to the threat posed by the new feast-day was expressed first through personal exchanges of letters. St Bernard saw the new celebration included in the Lyon calendar as a strange anomaly. He could not have foreseen the way it would gain a foothold in diocese after diocese.

With Nicholas of St Albans the debate moved to a new level. According to him, Mary's purity was equivalent to that of the forefathers of the human race before they committed their crime in the Garden of Eden. Peter of Celles, like St Bernard before him, could not have imagined

[10] The possibility of future papal decision on the Immaculate Conception is hinted at and is left open by Sixtus in 'nondum sit a romana ecclesia et apostolica sede decisum' [unless it should be decided by the apostolic Church of Rome] in *Grave nimis posterior* (Sericoli 1954: 380).

how attractive Nicholas' arguments were to become and how difficult to eradicate the new feast was to prove.

The first controversies over the doctrine in the twelfth century ranged tradition versus innovation. Later debate centred on tradition versus Mary's honour. Those who believed in the Immaculate Conception promoted Mary's honour with all the means at their disposal but still, at first, failed to win universal support for the doctrine outside England. The contribution of a small number of English Franciscans, including Scotus, was to win new victories by completely changing the context of the debate. The new hypothesis was that Mary would have been under the serpent's power had God not intervened to prevent it by anticipating the merits of his redemption of all humanity. Original sin and the universal dominion of the serpent over humanity no longer constituted an obstacle to the doctrine. Mary's new relationship to original sin placed her at the forefront of humanity's battle against the serpent.

The Dominicans upheld tradition, their opposition to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception hardened by Aquinas's *Summa*. Their position was now redefined as dishonour to Mary, as the Franciscan Order championed Scotus's arguments. From that point, conflict over the doctrine ensued, with the University of Paris becoming one of the major battle-grounds. The Monzón controversy reveals how the tide of opinion was turned in a mere ninety years at the university and how the traditional Dominican position could not even be taught there. The battle-lines had been redefined further to centre on heresy versus honour for Mary.

It was only in the early fourteenth century that Scotus's premises changed the basis of the doctrine so that it became more acceptable in the Church, gradually becoming part of university statutes and being promoted by authority figures, like kings. From the probability argued by Scotus came certainty. By the fifteenth century, universal opinion had veered to consider it unthinkable to condemn Mary to a share in the sin of mankind. The traditional opinion that Mary had been sanctified whilst in her mother's womb, held by the Dominicans, was beginning to seem an anomaly amidst the tide of support for the Conception doctrine, which swept all dissonance before it. Individuals, congregations, institutions, and eventually kingdoms, began to support the advance of the doctrine.

The first conciliar support for the Conception doctrine added weight to it in the middle of the century, although, in the end, the Council

was discredited (Ricossa 1994: 9–13). The definition meant that those in favour of the doctrine had their viewpoint underpinned by ecclesiastical authority for the first time. Even though the Council was not recognized by the Pope, in many regions, such as Gerona, the definition was adopted.

The Dominicans had begun to resort to charges of heresy against their opponents, however, their powerful position as guardians of the faith was undermined in the late fifteenth century by papal outlawing of such charges. The Dominicans were also outmanoeuvred by the Franciscans when it came to gaining royal support for their cause. As favoured confessors to royal households, the Franciscans had the ear of the holders of secular power and were better able to promote their side of the debate. The Dominicans' view was becoming increasingly marginalized and silenced by major players on the medieval stage. Once the Franciscans held the papacy at the end of the fifteenth century, then the first authoritative steps were taken to silence the Dominican viewpoint and the way was left open for further advances.

Those seeking to honour the Mother of God with the highest possible accolade available to a human person argued that the evil ensuing from original sin could never have corrupted Mary's body in the same way that it was to corrupt other women's. Her flesh, which became Christ's, could never have been tainted by sin. Insistence on the Conception doctrine, with its emphasis on Mary's sinless nature, was irresistible. The triumph of good over evil, required the elimination of sin from one human being in order to achieve it. Good was able to wipe away the taint of evil, before it was even envisaged. Good was infinitely more powerful than evil and the new doctrine underlined that power. Once the fifteenth century ended, the new mode of ensuring Mary's perfection, and its explicit rejection of the dominion of sin over Mary, although it still had a series of controversies to meet in the sixteenth century, had made important strides in winning the day. This was reflected in liturgy, as I showed in the previous chapter and these two chapters taken together contextualize the scriptural texts to be examined in the remaining chapters. I will now turn my attention to poetic texts promoting, praising, or defending the Immaculate Conception to see whether the same developments are present there.

CHAPTER FOUR

'DISCORDANS D'OPINIÓ': LITERARY DISCORD IN SPAIN

The battle between the serpent and the rose, between sin and purity, resulted in bitter conflict between those who supported the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, the immaculists, and those who opposed it, the maculists. The immaculists held that it was not fitting for the mother of God to have been even one instant in the stranglehold of original sin, whilst the maculists held that the Virgin had been in the power of original sin for one instant before she was sanctified by the action of God's spirit. The whole debate over the Conception of Mary was of prime importance to medieval theologians, because it centred on their understanding of how original sin was transmitted. In order to admit Mary as Immaculate, they had to suspend their belief in the physical transmission of original sin from parent to child, in accordance with Augustine's teachings and move to a new concept of original sin, which considered it a lack of grace rather than a physical impediment.

Debate over the doctrine was responsible for polarizing theological opinion across Europe in the fifteenth century. The exile of Nicholas Eymerich from Aragon in the late fourteenth century shows that the controversy, which had begun as a scholastic debate, had become more politicized and more acrimonious. It is in a context of exile and excommunication that evaluation of evidence taken from immaculist debate poems must be set. Given the heated emotions involved in university debate, it is to be expected that they will be reflected in poetry. Poets, many of them educated in the universities, many in holy orders, or belonging to one of the religious Orders, could not fail to take a stance through their poetry.

Authorities in Poetry

Use of authority was key to ensuring that arguments were taken seriously in poetic as well as university debate. Therefore, the first section of the chapter will concentrate on the importance of theological author-

ities and how they were used in fifteenth-century poetry. I will focus first on the poems exchanged by two poets on the subject of the Immaculate Conception in the *Cancionero de Baena*. The *Baena* debate on the Immaculate Conception consists of six poems (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 567–583; Twomey 2003b).[1] The rubric to the first poem in the series indicates that Diego Martínez de Medina, an illustrious member of Seville society, who in 1400 entered the Hieronymite Order in Guadalupe, was requested to initiate the 'quïstión' by the Dominicans in Seville: 'a suplicaçión e ruego de los frailes predicadores de Sant Pablo de Sevilla' [at the request and supplication of the Friars Preachers of St Paul in Seville].[2] Commissioning debate poems was an entertainment for the court and for royal patrons (Cummins 1963: 308–309), but this series of poems shows the concept of entertainment or propaganda for religious Orders was also a factor, since it was at the instigation of the Dominican friars that Martínez de Medina decided to cross swords with fray Lope del Monte, choosing a Franciscan as his adversary. Just as theologians followed the position taken by their own Order, fray Lope and Martínez de Medina follow Franciscan and Dominican positions. Some personal and professional details about the two are provided in the rubrics to the poems (Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 567; Twomey 2003b).

Bernard of Clairvaux, as Opponent and Supporter of the Doctrine

I have argued that concentration on St Bernard as a key authority by both poets is a consequence of his importance to the debate about the doctrine. He was also of prime importance in establishing what would become the authorities in the debate: tradition, the Fathers, Scripture, fittingness, and miracles (Fracheboud 1955: 186–200, cited in Lamy 2000: 206). I also showed how establishing the meaning of some of his key pronouncements on the subject of the Conception feast was pertinent because the series of poems were dedicated to a Bernardine nun, the Abbess of San Clemente (567).

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[1] All *cancionero* poems are identified using Brian Dutton's system (1982). The series of poems exchanged between fray Lope and Martínez de Medina are ID1449, ID1450 R1449, ID1451 R1450, ID1452 R1451, ID1453 R1452, ID1454 R1453.

[2] For the connection between poetic terminology and scholastic method, see Chas Aguión (2001: 109). A useful introductory study to scholastic methods is provided by Jan Pinborg, Anthony John Patrick Kenny, & Norman Kretzman (1982).

St Augustine, as Opponent and Supporter of the Doctrine

I have shown how both poets also draw on the authority of Augustine, a position which initially appears surprising for fray Lope, given the prevailing interpretation of *De natura et gratia.* Fray Lope comments on how St Augustine refers to the exception in the case of the Virgin, indicating there is a special case for her preservation from sin and supports his argument with a reference to 'contra manicheos'. I examined several treatises with the words *Contra Manichaeos* in the title and indicated that fray Lope might be reinterpreting discussion about the virginity of the Virgin Mary, uncorrupted by the birth of Christ, from *De fide contra Manichaeos* [On Faith against the Manichaeans] (PL 42: 1145–1146), applying it to the Conception. I used fray Lope's references to Augustine to show how arguments which were written or interpreted as contrary to the Conception, were shaped, until they could be cited in favour of what they opposed.

The discovery of a reference in a compilation of authorities in support of the doctine casts light on the reference to St Augustine. The *Brevis compilatio utrum beata virgo Maria in peccato originali fuerit concepta* [Brief Compilation about whether the Blessed Virgin was Conceived in Original Sin] (1983: 265), collated in response to Eymerich's outburst against the doctrine in 1395, refers also to St Augustine's *Contra Manichaeos* but specifies that this is to his gloss on Isaiah I. Fray Lope is probably referring to St Augustine's gloss on Isaiah, recognized as immaculist by the 1390s, which he could have known through a similar compilation.

Other Authorities Converted to Support for the Doctrine

Fray Lope calls on a range of other authorities to support his arguments, although without any other specific textual references. I have previously discussed (2003b) how Martínez de Medina is directed to consider the support accorded to the doctrine by two major Dominicans: the founder of the Order, St Dominic (d.1221) and Aquinas. References from liturgy from the late fifteenth century provide another reason why fray Lope could include both Dominicans among the supporters of the doctrine. When discussing fray Lope's use of authorities I was aware of evidence only from sixteenth-century liturgy, but fifteenth-century liturgy reveals that both saints were already being cited as supporters of the doctrine:

> Thomas: Maria ab omni peccato originali et actuali immunis fuit.
> Dominicus: Sicut primus adam fuit ex terra virgine et numquam maledicta formatur ita decuit in secundo adam fieri. (*Officium immaculatae conceptionis* [BC 1043], fol. 15^{r-v})
>
> [Thomas: Mary was free from all sin both original and actual.
> Dominic: Just as the first Adam was made from virgin soil which was never formed in malediction, so it was right that the second Adam was so formed.]

Aquinas and St Dominic are cited as supporters of the doctrine in the sixth lesson in Nogarolis's office. Compilations of immaculist citations, like the *Brevis compilatio* (1983: 244), show that the names of many theologians are listed as supporters of the doctrine, whereas previously they had been interpreted as arguing against it. There is a remarkable consonance between the compilation list and fray Lope's. His citations show that similar compilations must have been in circulation in Castile and that both saints had become supporters of the doctrine by the late fourteenth century.[3]

Fray Lope del Monte does not cite other doctors of the Church, who, by the fourteenth century, were commonly thought to have made immaculist statements in their writings but makes passing reference to them. I discuss his inclusion of 'devoto Sant Alfonso' [devout St Ildephonse] (570, l.97) and his feast for the Virgin: 'canta d'Ella en responso' [he sings responses about her] (l.99). St Ildephonse introduced a feast, common across the Peninsula, although it is found particularly in Toledo, which was celebrated on 18 December. It was a commemoration of Mary's v*irginitas in partu*. Use of St Ildephonse as an authority to support the Immaculate Conception is first found in Peter Thomas, who refers to *De partu virginale*, thought at the time to be by St Ildephonse (1665: Lib.II, 4a pars, cap. IV, 254). It has been argued that 'esta opinión estaba ya plenamente consolidada' [this opinion was fully consolidated] by 1431 (Vázquez Janeiro 1990: 318). Fray Lope's inclusion of him amidst immaculist authorities, in the last years of the fourteenth century, shows it was known earlier.

[3] José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras notes that both St Dominic and Aquinas are included among the authorities cited in the lesson for the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the breviary revised by Cardinal Quiñones (1958: 224–226). The breviary was condemned by the Sorbonne in 1535, although not on account of the Conception office. Laurie Jones Bergamini discusses how both saints appear in late medieval Italian paintings of the Immaculate Conception (1985: 314, 315, 319).

Fray Lope, like Peter Thomas, refers to the miracle story in which the saint was given a chasuble by the Virgin: 'diole una vestimenta / çelestial mucho preçiada' [she gave him a heavenly vestment held in high esteem] (571, ll.111–112). A version of the story is included in Berceo's *Milagros*. Its position as first miracle shows how important it, and St Ildephonse, were to the Castilians (See chapter 2).

St Anselm, known to be unfavourable to the doctrine, is also included among its supporters. Both his *Liber de conceptu virginali et originali peccato* [Book on the Virginal Conception and Original Sin] (PL 158–159: cols 431–468) and his *Cur Deus homo* (PL 158–159: cols 359–431) are key sources for his praise of the Virgin's purity and his understanding of original sin paved the way for development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. His *De conceptu virginali* is cited in the *Brevis compilatio* (1983: 265) and, by the end of the fifteenth century, his words are included as an antiphon in Nogarolis's office, showing that he too had made the transition from opponent to supporter: 'Decuit virginem ea puritate nitere quam maior sub deo nequit intelligi' [It is fitting that the Virgin should shine in purity for nothing greater is known under God] (BC 1043, fol. 18^{r}).

In my study of this part of the poem, I argued that fray Lope's inclusion of St Anselm as an immaculist authority was because of the belief that Eadmer's treatise was by him. Further evidence bears this out. Eadmer's treatise, *Tractatus de conceptione S. Mariae* (PL 159: cols. 302–318) was the first to establish that God was willing and able to sanctify the Virgin and therefore that he did so, an argument, which had enormous impact on thinking on the Immaculate Conception. Eadmer's treatise forms the fifth reading in Nogarolis's office (BC 1043, fol. 15^{v}).

I also discussed lesser-known authorities to support both sides of the argument and can add further evidence in support of the conclusions I reached. In the same stanza as mentioning St. Anselm, fray Lope alludes to 'Alano' and 'Pedro Comedor' as well as to 'Ovidio' and 'Terenso' (571, ll.114–117). I showed how Dutton and González Cuenca's edition is misleading in its references. Alain de L'Isle (1128–1203) owes his presence to being the author of the *Elucidatio in Cantica Canticorum*, Peter Comestor, author of the *Historia scholastica* (1993: 571) is more likely to be Pseudo-Peter Come *Sermo in conceptione B. Virginis* [Sermon on the Conception of the Blessed Virgin (1666: 614–623). I argued that the list of theologians cited by fray Lope was intended as a group of defenders of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, showing that both Ovid and Terence were included in the list because of scribal

error and indicated that Terence was probably included because of corruption of his name for Rupertus Tuitensis, or Rupert of Deutz (d.1135), a known defender of the Conception. I tentatively suggested that Ovid might have been included because a scribe misread Ovidio for Odilo of Cluny.

I now consider that there is another candidate with greater likelihood of being cited by fray Lope than Odilo. Gerard Odo's support for the doctrine was known in the Peninsula by the 1390s, in Aragon, and could have been known in Castile too. Odo's name is included as a defender of the Conception in the *Brevis compilatio*, where he wrote about Mary as star of the sea (1983: 290–291). Given the other medieval defenders of the doctrine included in the compilation, which include St Anselm (Eadmer), St Bernard, Aquinas, and Scotus, all of whom also appear in fray Lope's poem, the name of Odo brings coherence to the list of authorities (248).

The use of authority in immaculist liturgy also assists in determining the identity of the unknown 'Padre' who wrote that the Virgin was free from the stain of sin: 'El Padre dixo que fuera / sin manzilla de pecado' (ll.73–74). I indicated previously that it was impossible to determine who this unknown authority might be, that Fray Lope might be referring back to Dominic or to Aquinas, or to another, unnamed defender. The sixth lesson in Nogarolis's office includes brief quotations from Aquinas, St Dominic, St Bernard, and from Richard of St Victor. Given that Nogarolis's office uses the same authorities as the *Brevis compilatio*, it is likely that the same combination of authorities was already in existence and that fray Lope drew on it. His list already includes founders of major Orders: the Cistercian Order, St Bernard, the Augustinians, St Augustine, and the Dominican Order, St Dominic. The Victorines are not represented. It fits with fray Lope's methods to suggest that the unknown father he mentions could be Richard of St Victor.

The way authority is used in the six poems shows that there is more coherence than previously recognized. Scribal error probably led to anomalies such as the inclusion of classical authorities within a list of doctors thought by medieval scholars to have defended the Immaculate Conception.

Fray Lope bases his argument around key authorities. It is possible to speculate why he might have done so. First of all, they demonstrate that his arguments are to be taken seriously and that they carry weight. Second, he is able to display knowledge through referring to a wide range of sources. He uses his theological training, transferring his methodol-

ogy to debate poetry, rather than imitating specific scholastic arguments in poetic form. He does so in order to enhance his standing. The externals of scholastic teaching, beginning with use of authorities but also drawing on debate as a learning and teaching style, which the poets similarly appropriate from their university training, are fundamental in shaping how they approach their subject matter in the *CB*.

Fray Lope is not the only Castilian poet to openly attack the Dominican viewpoint. An interesting insight to the development of anti-maculist sentiments in Castile is provided by the early version of the *Coplas de Vita Christi* by fray Íñigo de Mendoza. He warns that the Virgin Advocate will not stay the hand of God when the Dominicans and others who oppose the doctrine are judged (Rodríguez Puértolas 1968: 386, 162D, l.6). He is pointing to the likelihood of damnation for Dominicans who do not believe in the Immaculate Conception:

> ¡O frayle preycador!
> D'aquí comiença a temblar
> que aquel Dios del temor,
> aquel justo juzgador,
> ella lo ha de amansar! (386, 162 E, l.6)
>
> [O friar preacher!
> Here begin to tremble
> for the hand of that God of wrath,
> that righteous judge
> she is to stay!]

The revision of the first version of the *Coplas* was probably undertaken in 1482. Rodríguez Puértolas comments that:

> Quizá lo más curioso de esta parte de la *Vita Christi* sea la fuerte diatriba contra los frailes predicadores o dominicos a propósito del discutido asunto de la Concepción Inmaculada […], porque nos muestra la capacidad que fray Íñigo tenía para la discusión violenta; es reveladora la diferencia de actitud personal entre las primeras y las siguientes versiones de la *Vita Christi*. (1968: 108)
>
> [Perhaps the most curious thing about this section of the *Vita Christi* is the powerful diatribe against the Friars Preacher or Dominicans about the Immaculate Conception, because it shows Fray Íñigo's capacity for aggressive discussion; it also reveals the differences in personal attitude between the early versions and the later versions of the *Vita Christi*.]

It may well be that the promulgation of *Grave nimis prior* in 1482 caused fray Íñigo de Mendoza to rethink his earlier condemnation of the Dominicans, although no such inhibition affected Catalan poets.

Many of the references to authority in the debate between fray Lope and Martínez de Medina, bear enough resemblance to the original to be identified. Such precise references to authority are not often found in *cancionero* immaculist poetry.[4] The one partial exception is in the prose gloss to the 'Loores e suplicaciones de Nuestra Señora' [Praises and Supplications to Our Lady] (ID3400). Its author provides further insight into the influence of scholastic teaching on the poetry of the period.

Before beginning, he sets his gloss in the context of the Incarnation and refers to the 'maestro e los doctores theologos' [masters and doctors of theology]. This adds authority to the commentary:

> La tu encarnaçión por toda la santa Trinidat fue obrada, más sólo enel hijo fue terminada e acabada, etc., segunt dize el Maestro de las sentençias e los doctores theólogos sobre Él, en el terçero libro de las sentençias. (in Foulché-Delbosc 1912–1915: II, 148; Manrique 2003: 288)
>
> [Your Incarnation was brought about by all the persons of the Holy Trinity, but was only achieved and completed in the Son, according to the Master of the Sentences (Peter Lombard) and the theological doctors commenting on Him in the Third Book of Sentences.]

When he comes to the heading 'Trinidat', the commentator again refers to Peter Lombard's Sentences:

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[4] Other religious poems in the *CB* include precise reference to authoritative sources. One example is from a *respuesta* about predestination by fray Diego de Valencia:

> Alixandre de Ales, que ovo loança
> en la teología e maestro provado,
> desí maestre Pedro de Paris en Françia,
> obispo e maestro, Lonbardo llamado,
> e Santo Thomas, doctor coronado,
> fablaron en esto que devemos creer:
> que Dios fizo al omne por solo querer
> que lo sirviesse e fuesse d'él loado. (369–370, ll.17–24)
>
> [Alexander Hales, who was praised
> in theology and was a consummate master,
> also Master Peter of Paris in France,
> bishop and master, called Lombard,
> and St Thomas, crowned doctor,
> spoke of this which we should believe:
> that God made man just to
> serve him and so he could praise him.]

> […], porque si toda la Santa Trinidat la Santa Encarnación obró, en sólo el Hijo se terminó, porqu' Él solo se encarnó, segunt dize el Maestro de las sentençias e los doctores theólogos sobre el terçero libro de las sentençias, en la distinción primera, e en el primero, en la distinción XV. (148; 290)
>
> [Because, if all the holy Trinity brought about the Incarnation, it was achieved in just the Son, because he alone was incarnate, as the Master of the Sentences and the doctors of theology write on the third book of the Sentences, in the first distinction, and on the first book, in distinction fifteen.]

Rather then intending to cite from Peter Lombard, he is referring to the manner of expounding the *Sententiae*, the accepted manner of teaching in universities. All other immaculist verse is laudatory and does not cite authorities.

Authority in Certamen Poems

Certamen poetry was written some eighty years later than the *CB* poems and provides a different perspective on use of authorities. Francí de Vilalba, a nobleman and poet, who was Lord of Tormos, was a participant in both the 1474 and 1486 *certàmens*. He summarizes Scotus's, or Asquot's, arguments on the Immaculate Conception: 'que ·n vós may fon peccat original, / segons escriu lo gran doctor Asquot, / al dit del qual res contradir no ·s pot' [for in you there was no original sin, as the great doctor Scotus wrote, and what he says cannot be contradicted in any way] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 521, ll.9–11). Vilalba's reference to Scotus assumes that he stated his belief openly, whereas he did no more than argue that freedom from original sin would have been fitting for the Virgin. Vilalba also states firmly that there can be no opposition to Scotus's teaching. This marks a turnabout from the time of Aquinas, when the great master's teaching would have brooked no contradiction. Within two hundred years, the same claim is being made for the opposing view.

Lluís Roïç, a new Christian or *converso* poet, and a public secretary in Valencia, wrote a poem entered for the marzipan prize. In it, he takes the same stance as Vilalba, countering the authority of earlier theologians with the argument that previous authorities made mistakes about the doctrine:

> Dels sants, les doctrines que tal no us loaren
> no foren perfetes que ·rrar no poguessen,
> que ligen-se moltes rahons en què ·rraren,
> y aquells per aquelles jamés no peccaren,
> puix Déu no ·ls donava més lum que més vesen.
> Tots jorns Déu revela de nou al món noves,
> les quals ignoraven sants hi patriarques,
> e ja huy s'aproven no sols per ses proves
> mas tota la Sgleya com a regles noves
> per fe les decreta en nostres comarques. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 489, ll.49–58)
>
> [The doctrines of the saints, who did not praise you (as immaculate),
> were not so perfect that they could not go astray,
> for there is a great deal of reasoning which is off track,
> and they did not sin because of them,
> for God did not give them more clarity.
> Each day God reveals new things afresh to the world
> which saints and patriarchs did not know,
> and today they are approved not only through proofs
> but the whole Church decrees them through faith
> with new rules in our regions.]

Roïç's poem, which won the 'joya', argues that new revelation provides truths unknown to saints and patriarchs of the Church. Because he is convinced that contemporary theologians have a more perfect grasp of revelation than the Fathers of the Church, he can allow evidence contrary to the Immaculate Conception from them to be dismissed as imperfect revelation. Although no explicit reference is made to any theologian, the argument owes its origin, according to Brady, to Peter Thomas (1955: 176). The *certamen* audience would be well able to decipher the inference, for Thomas had been *lector* at the Studium of Barcelona, the forerunner of its university, founded in 1450, and was a home-grown theologian.

At the end of this argument, there is further evidence of the tendency to discount the views of Fathers of the Church: 'D'açò ·l gran Aureli tenim per exemple, / la nova portant-nos del virginal temple' [Hence, we have the great Aurelius as an example, bringing us the news of the virginal temple] (ll.59–60). Ferrando Francés believes that Roïç is referring to Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, although he does not explain how Aurelius is linked to argument about new revelation. It is more likely Roïç is using 'Aureli' to refer to Peter Aureoli, 'the first Franciscan to write a treatise or book devoted *ex professo* and exclusively to the defence of the Immaculate Conception' (Di Lella 1955: 146) who

certainly fits the description of being a channel of new revelation. What is more, Roïç has developed his argument to give more importance to later theologians, rather than to the saints from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who all denied the doctrine.

The shift in how authorities are used is typified by the use of Scripture in Pere de Vilaspinosa's poem. Vilaspinosa was a Valencian notary, who submitted to the 1486 *certamen* and who was known for his Marian poetry. He was the author of a *Salve Regina* and is also credited with being the author of the *Goigs de la gloriosa Mare de Déu de la Concepció* [Joys of the Conception of the Mother of God]:

> No ·s troba test en la Sacra Scriptura
> que vós siau en peccat concebuda,
> d'on s'infereix ab rahó clara y pura
> que l'Increat vos creà sens mixtura
> tant purament quant pura us ha volguda. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 445, ll.37–41)
>
> [There can be found no text in Holy Scripture
> saying you are conceived in sin
> and from this it can be inferred with pure, clear reason
> that the Eternal One created you without mixture
> as purely as he wanted you to be.]

The conclusion, which might be expected to such a dearth of scriptural references to the Immaculate Conception, is precisely the opposite of the one given. He concludes that, because Scripture is silent on the matter and because there is no biblical authority contrary to the doctrine, the immaculate nature of the Virgin can be inferred.

Reference to authority is a part of poetry both in favour of and in opposition to the Immaculate Conception. Reference to authority, however, has a different focus in the *certamen* poems to that in the *CB*. In the series of poems in the *CB*, the two poets were keen to demonstrate their knowledge of the key opinions expressed about the doctrine in a range of texts, culled mainly from the theology of St Bernard and St Augustine. The *certamen* poets refer on occasion to St Augustine or Scotus without giving references to specific texts. The poets appear to be far more interested in present-day authorities, such as the very recent papal recognition of the doctrine and the feast. Moreover, the poets are keen to establish that the opinions of the opponents to the doctrine are wrong-headed, associated with the devil, and sure to fail. On occasion, the opponents are specifically identified as the Dominicans. The opposition of a group of secular priests to the newly recognized Conception feast is also noted.

Papal Authority

Just after the publication of the Papal Bull, *Grave nimis*, supporters of the doctrine felt vindicated by the Franciscan Pope, Sixtus IV, especially when he followed it with a decree and forbade either side to decry the opposition as heretical. The *introït* to the 1486 *certamen* alludes to this important new authority and to the Pope's institution of Nogarolis's Conception office:

> Ja lo Sixt Papa declarar
> vol en l'offici
> tan gran misteri ·n benefici
> dels crestians.
> Mas huy los nostres capellans
> seguir no ·l volen,
> puix tals laors cantar no solen
> del ver parer. (436, ll.58–65)
>
> [For Pope Sixtus wished to declare
> in the office
> such a great mystery for the benefit of Christians.
> But today our chaplains
> do not want to follow,
> since they are not accustomed to singing such praises
> of the true opinion.]

Ferrando Díeç mentions all the benefits brought by celebrating the feast and is referring to the indulgences obtained. He also takes the opportunity to condemn priests who are refusing to celebrate it, even though this was perfectly within their right.

Opposition to the Doctrine

Neither the *certàmens* nor the *cancioneros* preserve any poetry in defence of the maculist position, except for Martínez de Medina's poems. His first poem opens the debate on the Immaculate Conception, a burning contemporary topic, selecting fray Lope as its respondent, 'una quïstión qu'él ovo con fray Lope del Monte' [a debate he had with fray Lope]. Both sets of poems are entirely dependent on the responses of the other poet and the tentative maculist viewpoint of Martínez de Medina was, no doubt, thought to be countered by fray Lope. It is likely that poems opposed to the doctrine have been lost (see Deyermond's study of lost literature [1995: 20–27]). Opposition to the doctrine must, therefore, be

gleaned from poetry in favour of the doctrine. Martínez de Medina, as discussed earlier, calls on both St Bernard and St Augustine as opponents of the doctrine. Although St Augustine is mentioned in *certamen* poems, citing authorities brings out new evidence of how they were regarded in immaculist circles. In the *introït*, Díeç cites St Augustine as an authority for the modern method of interpreting texts:

> Al descubert, giramantells,
> Qui la regiren,
> molt prop d'eretges, si bé miren
> lo que ·ns ha dit
> sent Agostí, del qu·és escrit
> dient: 'Qui u glosa
> al seny que vol, ab mala glosa
> sia maleyt'. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 436: l.36)
>
> [Out in the open, turncoats,
> who are steering (Scripture)
> very close to heresy,
> if they look closely
> at what has been said to us
> by St Augustine, of whom it is written:
> 'He who glosses with his own meaning
> shall be tarred with a bad gloss.']

Díeç selects St Augustine because of the stance he took in defending Church doctrine against heresy. Since Díeç wants to put the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception on exactly the same footing as the Virgin Birth, defended against Pelagius, he chooses St Augustine as defender of true doctrine. Díeç refers to modern theologians, whom he categorizes as 'giramantells' [turncoats], indicating that their interpretations of Scripture are close to heresy. The Valencian equivalent of 'giramantells', 'giracamises', is still in use as a term of abuse today. Among a series of insults directed at a journalist in *El Mundo* for his opinions are: 'fatxó', 'foraster', 'mafiós', 'paranoic', 'giracamises', and 'Judes Iscariot' [fascist, foreigner, mafioso, paranoid, turncoat, and Judas] (*www.archive.comais@araisempre.org.msg.02555* [consulted 16.3.07]). Modern Valencian usage shows it is still a powerful insult. Amid the terms of abuse turncoat is linked to Judas Iscariot and it is interesting to speculate that just such a connection may have been behind Díeç's use of it. Judas, the disciple who turned against Jesus, was the supreme example of the turncoat, and the association with betrayal of the Church's leader and of the Church underlies dishonour of Christ's mother.

The term 'giracamises' by the seventeenth century in popular usage meant 'inconstant' but also 'voluble' (Martí Mesre 2006: 291). It would be a perfect descriptive term for the Dominicans whose Primitive Constitution commanded them to 'wrestle with words' and to follow 'in the footsteps of the Savior as evangelical men speaking among themselves or their neighbours either with God or about God' (*www.domcentral.org/trad/fundamental.htm* [consulted 16.3.07]). The association of wordiness and 'giramantells' points to the Dominicans as the recipients of the term of abuse. It is also possible to speculate that the term had some connection with the habits of the Dominicans. They were required to put on the scapular when they engaged in work, which covered their white habits with black. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the term 'turncoat' was being used in sixteenth-century English for anything that changed colour (1962: 2268). The Franciscans did not need to make any changes to their outer garments, as their habits were the drab grey-brown, which fitted them for work wear as well as for other usage. Focusing on the change of colour proper to the Dominicans might also have made the term appropriate as an insult for them.

Díeç's method reveals that there has been a change over the eighty years separating fray Lope's writing from the *certamen* poets. Heresy was an important issue for the Franciscans, particularly with the Inquisition in the hands of the Dominicans. The Franciscan Pope, Sixtus, had outlawed charges of heresy in the debate just a few years before. *Certamen* poets, like Díeç are not averse to taking a sly dig at their opponents with it.

The two brief references to Scotus and his disciples in the *certamen* also provide evidence of changes in the balance of power between the Scotists and the Dominicans. Pere d'Anyó, a nobleman, possibly of royal lineage and in holy orders, who also submitted a poem to the *certamen* in honour of St Christopher, is testimony of how the immaculists' position is strengthening: 'Les grans escotilles ab proves fundades / les han sobre ·ls núvols axí sublimades, / que resta per terra l'inich tomatista' [the great Scotists with solid proofs have set them above the clouds, whilst the infamous Dominican is grounded] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 514, ll.87–89). D'Anyó is referring to Scotus's disciples, whom he associates with the heavenly opinion on the doctrine 'sobre·ls núvols' and also with the opinion which is gaining ground. 'Tomatista' [Thomas lover] is used as a term of abuse and applies at the same time to Aquinas and the entire Dominican Order. Both are

associated with the earthly point of view and discredited. The Dominicans, earth-bound, are on the losing side in the debate.

For the most part, *certamen* poets are content to hint at the opposing view, referring to it in generic terms, but, when Vilaspinosa calls on university teachers to remain silent, if they are not in agreement: 'Callen doctores' (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 445, l.13), he is also hinting at the situation in which the Dominicans found themselves after the Monzón case. They were prohibited from teaching against the Conception doctrine in the University of Paris and were only readmitted to other universities after many years of exclusion.

Poets in the kingdom of Aragon do not usually name their opponents. However, on two occasions in the 1486 *certamen*, they single out the Dominicans, 'pricadors' [Preachers], for opprobrium:

> Hoiu, pricadors, les santes doctrines,
> gustau un poquet d'aquest letovari.
> A fe que són dulces, sabors tenen fines,
> hoiu lo concert de cobles divines
> de crim preservant lo digne sacrari.
> Lexau per mercé la fe tan errada
> bateu-vos los pits, digau vostra culpa,
> car may fonch mester entrar en bugada
> la tela ·n lo cel tostemps preservada
> d'aquel trist foment que ·ls altres enculpa. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 501–502, ll.25–34)
>
> [Hear, Preachers, the holy doctrines,
> taste a little of this sweetmeat.
> They are sweet, in faith, and have a fine taste,
> hear the harmony of divine verse,
> preserving the worthy sacristy from sin.
> For mercy's sake, leave your false belief
> beat your breast, admit your sin,
> for it was never necessary to put through a rinse
> the cloth always preserved in heaven
> from that sad turmoil that affects others.]

The poem throughout describes the Immaculate Conception as though it were a sweet. The poet, Jordi Centelles or Sentelles, illegitimate son of the Count of Oliva was a canon at Valencia Cathedral, who held a number of benefices around the city. Centelles was author of a number of devotional works written in Valencian, including a *Cobla a la plaga del Redemtor e Salvador nostre Jhesucrist* [Poem on the Wound of Our Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ] and an *Oració en stramps feta a la Sancta Creu* [Prayer in Verse on the Holy Cross].

Centelles was trying to win the marzipan prize and in his poem he begs the 'pricadors', members of the Order of Preachers, to taste the new doctrine, 'gustau un poquet'. It both tastes 'sabors tenes fines' and sounds sweet 'lo concert de cobles divines'. However, in the last lines of the stanza, Centelles switches metaphors and describes the Virgin as though she were a piece of cloth, and her flesh, thus becomes the fabric, from which the robe for Christ is to be formed. Centelles shows some knowledge of the process for preparing fine cloth, because he refers to the necessity for the cloth to 'entrar en bugada' [to be rinsed]. Valencia was the centre of silk-making (Navarro Espinach 1999) and many of those present would have been engaged in its production or selling. The cloth-making metaphor is one which is frequently found in the *certàmens*.

Centelles exhorts the Dominicans to leave behind their misguided opinions on the Conception: 'fe tan errada' [misguided belief]. Centelles considers their opinions sinful, and may even be interpreting them as heretical. Linking the Dominican views on the Immaculate Conception with heresy is a feature of immaculist poetry (Twomey 1997). He then pictures the Dominicans taking the attitude of penitents and calls on them to beat their breasts and to declare their sin: 'bateu-vos los pits, digau vostra culpa'. With irony, he reverses the position of the Dominicans, who staff the Holy Office, and those they judge and condemn, forced to make public confession of their heretical beliefs. Following judgement by the court of heaven, the Dominicans will take up the demeanour of those who pass through their hands. The topic is very contemporary, since the Inquisition had been established in Spain only in 1484. Antoni Ferrando Francés points to the vigilant presence of the Inquisition as a reason why the competition took a much more theological and apologetic tone. However, he does not remark on the fact that the competition organizer, Díeç, as well as many of the entrants, like Centelles, adopted an aggressive tone towards the Dominicans, relying on the fact that charges of heresy could not be brought for defending the Immaculate Conception following *Grave nimis*.

Díeç, as competition judge, singles out the Dominicans by name in a poem which proclaims Roïç winner of the marzipan category. Díeç states that the reason for selecting him is that 'contra ·ls malignes / de pricadors frares rahons diu insignes' [against the evil Friars Preacher he gave eminent proofs] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 507, ll.11–12). Díeç is open about not selecting the winning poem on literary merit but

because of its powers of reasoning. He is keen to emphasize that it serves as a weapon against the opponents of the doctrine.

Instances in which opposition to the doctrine is mentioned are not confined to the *certamen* poems. In the *Espill*, Jaume Roig refers to the 'altra scola […] / que opina altra doctrina' [another school who argue a different doctrine] (1978: 156) without naming any. The openness Roig shows to the opposing view was amended by the editor of the 1531 edition:

> No va creure oportú aquesta actitud de tolerància probablement perquè l'opinió comuna o potser la de la cort reial era favorable a la creença en l'exempció de culpa original […] i els versos van ser substitüits per d'altres, que proclamaven la fe en aquest dogma. (1978: xvii)
>
> [Such an attitude of tolerance was not considered timely probably because the common view or perhaps that of the royal court was favourable to the belief in her exemption from original sin and the verses were replaced by others which proclaimed faith in the dogma.]

Constructing Scholastic Arguments in Poetic Form

Poets do not simply use their scholastic training to underpin the way they regard authorities but it also influences how they construct their arguments. This can be seen in two ways, first in a general influence on poetic methodology and then as a reflection of some specific scholastic arguments.

One major stylistic device drawn from scholastic debate is a reliance on indefinite verb forms particularly the subjunctive mood. Critical study has already emphasized frequent use of such forms in *cancionero* poetry. María Rosa Lida de Malkiel has commented on how often they were used in Juan de Mena's poetry: 'períodos condicionales en forma de período disyuntivo o de oración interjectiva o interrogativa' [conditional phrases as disjunctive clauses or interjected clauses or interrogative clauses], which she interprets as a desire to give a flavour of Latin style to vernacular poetry (1984: 305, 306). The frequency with which conditional sentences are used in medieval lyric and their connection to scholastic forms of argument are more pronounced than Lida de Malkiel conceded. An example from the writing of Scotus will serve to show how scholastic theologians turned to indefinite tenses to prove the necessity of the Virgin's preservation from sin:

> Est etiam ibi beata Virgo mater Dei, quae numquam fuit inimica actualiter ratione peccati actualis, nec ratione peccati originalis; fuisset, tamen, si non fuisset praeservata. (Lib.III.d.18.q. unic.) (1968: 400)
>
> [Also the blessed Virgin Mother of God is there, who never was out of favour with God through actual sin nor through original sin, she would have been, had she not been preserved.]

Arnau de Cors or Descós, a Majorcan poet with strong connections to a number of high-ranking churchmen and cousin of another of the *certamen* poets, Jaume d'Olesa, had studied humanities in Naples. He was one of three Majorcans, all related, who submitted entries for the competition. He wrote various treatises, and his immaculist credentials are attested by his being author of an apology of Lullism, the *Defensorium doctrinae B. Raymondi Lulli* [Defence of the Doctrine of Blessed Ramon Llull]. In his poem submitted to the 1486 *certamen*, he appeals to the emotions, using the subjunctive, as he shows what would happen were the Virgin to have contracted original sin:

> Romp-se mon cor pensant cosa tan fera
> que sols un punt, verge, de vós se diga,
> fósseu jamés sots la taqua primera,
> que ·n tal instant del Sathan presonera
> seríeu vós y de Déu inimiga. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 463, ll.73–77)
>
> [May my heart break should it think anything so savage
> as that, even for one instant, Virgin, it might be said
> that you were ever subject to original sin,
> for, in that instant, you would be
> prisoner of Satan and enemy of God.]

The effect of 'fósseu' is that de Cors distances himself from the opinion expressed, at the same time as undermining it with 'romp-se mon cor' [may my heart break] and 'fera'. He shows how he would consider the maculist viewpoint with its acceptance that the Virgin might have been subject to original sin to be personally shocking. Scotus had argued that what was most fitting should be applied to the Virgin and de Cors presents a poetic version of his argument.

Ramon Vivot was also of Majorcan extraction, probably belonging to the same noble family as Arnau de Cors, because his mother was Caterina Descós. The rubric styles him 'cavaller mallorquín' [a Majorcan knight]. In his poem, written for the ruby prize in the 1486 *certamen*, Vivot also employs the *topos* of dismay, which takes a physical form, when the Virgin is dishonoured. He uses a conditional perfect to highlight the improbability of her being tainted by original sin. Vivot argues

that, since her Son did not allow her to commit minor sins, he would not have allowed her to be bound by '·l peccat maligne':

> E si lo Fill may permés, mare pia,
> qu·ab vós estigués peccat venial,
> qui de paradís no ·ns tanca la via,
> tengud· aureu menys, o verge Maria,
> la màcula tal,
> qui ·ns tanca los cels ab culpa mortal. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 473–474, ll.61–66)
>
> [And if the Son never allowed, pious mother,
> venial sin to take hold in you,
> which does not close the way to paradise to us,
> how much less, o Virgin Mary, was there present
> such a blemish,
> which with mortal sin closes heaven's gate to us.]

Vivot bases his argument on St Augustine's exception to the universality of sin, made in the case of Mary, from *De natura et gratia*. He takes a similar line of approach to Aureoli's *Tractatus de conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis*. Aureoli argues:

> It is certain that original sin is greater and more detestable than venial sin since the former merits God's wrath and eternal damnation, which the latter does not. Ergo, if Christ detested venial sin in her who conceived and gave birth to him, *a fortiori* did he detest original sin in her. (1904)

Vivot had used conditional tenses earlier in the poem to argue from an accepted tenet of faith to prove one which was more debatable. He takes the accepted tenet of the Virgin's perpetual virginity as his starting point to argue that, if Mary's conception were sinful, the privilege of perpetual virginity could never have been granted: 'Reyna pel semblant, si fon de vós feta / la concepció de crim en tal grau, / virginitat vós no ·uríeu perfeta' [Queen by outward appearance, if your conception was marked with such a level of sin, you would not have possessed perfect virginity] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 473, ll.31–33).

Indefinite tenses and indirect questions were a feature of the debate poems in the *CB* and an intrinsic way of establishing the point of view to be countered by the respondent. Martínez de Medina uses the premise that St Bernard was opposed to the Immaculate Conception and he would not have been so if it had been true:

Faz me luego dubdar
Bernaldo, ca non dixiera
contra esto si assí fuera, […].

[Bernard, makes me unsure,
for he would not have spoken against it
if it were so.]

The conditional sentence opens the postulation to debate and to response by fray Lope.

In the same way, in his response, fray Lope argues from the premise that St Augustine always praised the Virgin's perfect nature and he would not have done so had she been sinful:

Si Santo Agostín toviera
d'ella esta entençión,
d'esto nunca arguyera
la erege condición,
ca loó la perfeción
de la Virgen estremada,
como non fuera culpada
en su santa conçebción. (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 572, ll.177–184)

[If St Augustine had
intended such a thing for her,
he would never have argued
an heretical condition for her,
for he praised her perfection,
as if she were not sinful
in her holy conception.]

In the case of the immaculist poems, indefinite tenses and conditional structures convey the nuances of argument on the possibility of Mary's Immaculate Conception or the improbability of the opposing view, and their antecedents are the commentaries written by theologians defending the doctrine.

Scholastic Arguments: Possibility and Fittingness

Scholastic debate on the subject of the Immaculate Conception influenced not only the style of the language but also the content of poetic arguments. The best known are the two syllogisms: *potuit-decuit-fecit* and *potuit-voluit-fecit* which became a standard way of arguing in favour of the doctrine in the fifteenth century. The earliest expression of the

argument *potuit-voluit-fecit*, which resurfaced in the writing of Scotus's disciples, is found in Eadmer's *Tractatus de conceptione B. Mariae Virginis*. He includes the story of the chestnut, encased in a thorny exterior but milky-white and smooth inside, which serves as an example of how the Laws of Nature could be suspended in Mary's case:

> Si Deus castaneae confert, ut inter spinas remota punctione concipiatur […] non potuit haec dare humano quod ipse sibi parabat templo in quo corporaliter habitaret? […] potuit plane, et voluit; si igitur voluit, fecit. (PL 159: 305D)
>
> [If God made the chestnut, so that it was conceived among thorns but far from their pricking, could he not give the same to the human temple, which he was preparing for himself in which to dwell bodily? He clearly could and wanted to do so and, if he wanted to then he did.]

The argument from possibility, *potuit*, revolutionized debate on the Immaculate Conception in the early fourteenth century. Scotus's argument is developed as follows: 'Ita posset Deus eam in primo instanti Conceptionis Virginis, dando tunc gratiam delere, ne esset causa necessaria infectionis animae, sed gratia tollerat culpam in anima' [So God could eliminate sin in the first instant of the Conception of the Virgin, so that it did not pollute her soul, but by grace took away the sin in her soul] (III.d.3.q.i) (1968: 93). Scotus never argued *potuit-decuit-fecit* and he did not affirm that the Virgin had been preserved from original sin. He suggested its possibility, adding the precaution that 'si auctoritate Ecclesiae vel auctoritate Scripturae non repugnet' [if this were not against the authority of the Church or of Holy Scripture] (Lib.III.d.3.q.1) (1968: 95).

It was left to his disciples, John of Naples, Francis Mayronis, and Peter Aureoli, to develop *potuit-decuit-fecit* fully (Brady 1955: 192, Lamy 2000: 468–471):

> Totum motivum quo ista sententia de praeservatione beatae Virginis a peccato originali fulcitur, in hac ratione consistere videtur, quod Deus hoc facere potuit, et si potuit, decuit, et si decuit, factum fuerit. (Aureoli 1904: 34)
>
> [All motive, through which this conclusion about the preservation of the blessed Virgin from original sin is supported, seems to consist in this reason, that God could do it and, if he could, it was fitting and, if it were fitting, then he did it.]

Echoes of the syllogism, with its emphasis on God's role in the preservation of the Virgin from sin in her Conception, are found in Catalan writing, such as Roig's *Espill*: 'Déu, qui hu sabia / tal la volgué, volent

pogué / fer-la tan neta' [God who knew this, wanted her unblemished, and because he wanted to, he could create her so] (1978: 158). His argument, like Eadmer's, takes as its foundation the idea that God was both capable and desirous of suspending the Laws of Nature in the case of the Virgin.

The second premise centres on what was fitting, *decuit*, for the Virgin Mary. Scotus argued that whichever were better for the Virgin Mary should be believed, 'videtur probabile quod excellentius est attribuere Mariae' (III.d.3.q.1) (1968: 95), provided it were not contrary to accepted tenets of belief. Alfred Gontier, one of Scotus's disciples had developed the argument further than Scotus:

> Praeterea matri Christi debemus attribuere quidquid honoris et laudis possumus, quod non est contra fidem, licet ex Scriptura expresse non habeatur: patet de eius sanctificatione et confirmatione et assumptione in anima et corpore: sed, quod ex merito passionis Christi praevisae a Deo fuerit a peccato originali praeservata, sicut ab actuali, hoc cedit ad honorem eius nec est contra dignitatem Christi, quia non habuit unde peccatum contraxerit. (Lib.III *Sententiarum*, fol. 130^{rb}, cited by Alfaro 1955: 602)
>
> [Thus, we should attribute to the Mother of God whatever honour and praise we can, which is not against the faith even though it might not be in Scripture: it is clear that this applies to her sanctification, confirmation, and assumption in body and soul but the fact that she was preserved by God from original sin as well as from actual sin by the merit of Christ's passion, anticipated, favours her honour and is not against the dignity of Christ that he had no place from which to contract sin.]

Many of the *certamen* poets promote the same concept:

> Decent fon molt no y fósseu vós compresa,
> puix a Déu pur lo no pur és difforme.
> Volgué y pogué que may fósseu offesa
> d'aquella ley que ·n los humans s'és mesa. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 445: ll.42–45)
>
> [It was very fitting that you should not be imprisoned in it [sin]
> for to pure God what is impure is monstrous.
> He desired and was able to grant you were never
> offended by that law which is present in humans.]

Vilaspinosa argued in his 'Lo Verb etern' [the eternal Word] that it was God's will and that He was capable of preventing the Virgin from being dishonoured by original sin. He completes the syllogism by adding that this was a fitting result. By the time Vilaspinosa used the argument in 1486, it rested on over a century of scholastic proofs of the doctrine.

The suitability of the Virgin for the honours accorded her and the fittingness of honouring her are key themes in *certamen* poems. Frare Jaume del Bosch, Commander of Onda in the Order of the Knights of Our Lady of Montesa, was a distinguished *certamen* entrant. To mark this, his poem is preceded by a lengthier rubric than most of the others. He submitted it in the ruby category and won the prize. Ferrando Francés points both to the lack of literary merit in the poem and to the way in which it is a strong defence against maculism: 'd'indubtable combativitat teològica' [definite theological argumentativeness] (1983: 417). The argument from possibility, complete with the affirmative *fecit*, is present in frare Bosch's poem, with the argument about what was fitting implicit: 'fer-ho pogué la virtut infinida; / y u féu de fet, que ·l deute lo y convida, / e si no u fes d'Ell fóra deshonor' [infinite virtue could do it, and it did indeed do so, for debt moved him to it, and if were not so, it would be dishonour] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 459, ll.55–57).

Bosch begins with a stanza outlining the position of the Immaculate Conception in salvation history. The second stanza establishes the importance of Mary as a container for God's Son, showing how God wishes to construct a beautiful palace as his dwelling place. Bosch then spends the third stanza pointing out the error of the ways of those who oppose the doctrine. He turns to the fittingness premise in the fourth stanza:

> Mas subvenir, puix fós preelegida
> tan altament, mare del Creador,
> fer-ho pogué la virtut infinida;
> y u féu de fet, que ·l deute lo y convida,
> e si no u fes d'Ell fòra deshonor. (459, ll.53–57)
>
> [Since you were pre-elected
> to such a high estate, mother of the Creator,
> his infinite virtue could do it;
> and he did do it, for duty called him to it,
> and if he did not do it, it would be a dishonour.]

Bosch's syllogism rests on the possibility in 'pogué' that Mary could have been preserved from original sin and on *fecit*: 'y u fés', he did it. Bosch does not base the third premise on divine will but rather on duty, which emphasizes the relationship between the Son and His Mother rather than on the preparatory action of God as divine disposer. His argument could be taken to be supporting one aspect of fittingness, in other words what is right for sons to do for their mothers, although it

could be placed under *debet*, what ought to be done. Bosch's argument is thus *potuit-debet-fecit*.

Vallmanya, probably a Barcelona poet called Antoni Vallmanya, returns consistently to the Virgin's preservation from sin as a fitting honour for her: 'incongru li fóra dexar gens offendre' [it would be incongruous to her to let her ever be offended] and 'convenient era, puix que us abilita / lo Fill que us afilla, siau pura dita' [it was fitting that you were prepared by the Son who engendered you, to be called pure] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 453, ll.87, 90–91). Scotus's disciples had argued that sanctification was less fitting for the Virgin than the Immaculate Conception, and that, therefore, the immaculist viewpoint should be believed. The argument took its origins in the thinking of twelfth-century defenders of the Conception: Pseudo-Anselm (Eadmer), Pseudo-Peter Comestor, Pseudo-Peter the Cantor, Pseudo-Abelard, Nicholas of St Albans, and Pseudo-John of Mandeville (Lamy 2000: 196).

Scholastic argument in either the *potuit-voluit-fecit* or the *potuit-decuit-fecit* variation is a constant in Catalan *certamen* poetry. Appropriation of scholastic arguments represents a deliberate attempt to situate the poetry within the field of theological debate and to accord it *gravitas*. Further examples of scholastic arguments will be considered in other chapters, so that the way poets combine them with prefigurations of Mary from Scripture can be examined.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter examined how, from the late fourteenth century onward, immaculist poets used many means, including reference to authority, to display their learning and bolster their arguments as well as to discredit their opponents. In the *CB*, both fray Lope del Monte and Martínez de Medina exchange fire through allusions to the writings of a range of Church Fathers. Fray Lope shows early evidence of how several of these major theologians, particularly St Anselm, Aquinas, and St Dominic, were recast as immaculist authorities. Other theologians treated in the same way by him include Alain de L'Isle, Pseudo-Peter Comestor, and Eadmer. I have shown that both fifteenth-century Conception liturgy and a late fourteenth-century compendium of theologians writing in favour of the Immaculate Conception provide evidence of the technique of revising where the authorities stood on any given concept.

It is only occasionally that opponents of the doctrine speak for themselves in poetry. One important example is the moderate and cautious approach to the debate taken by Martínez de Medina. The writings of other poets opposed to the doctrine must have existed but they do so no longer. Martínez de Medina's poems are preserved because their arguments are roundly rebuffed by his opponent. However, the existence of opposition to the doctrine is visible through the writing of supporters of the doctrine who refer to them with insulting epithets like 'giramantells' or 'tomatistas'.

By the time fray Íñigo de Mendoza is writing, he displays a far greater degree of caution over mentioning the Conception, even revising his manuscript and air-brushing away his earlier references to opponents of the doctrine. His contemporaries in the kingdom of Aragon showed no such discretion. *Certamen* poets' quotations from patristic authorities are less frequent and it must be argued that they display their debt to scholasticism through the style of their arguments rather than through quotation. What is more, their attitude to authorities is completely different to fray Lope and Martínez de Medina's. In the fifteenth century the poets argue that many Doctors of the Church were not in possession of the full truth and that their opposition to the doctrine should be disregarded. Similarly, they turn the lack of evidence from Scripture on its head. In the twelfth century, when St Bernard could not find reference to the Immaculate Conception in Scripture, he argued that it was a dangerous innovation and he preferred to dismiss it. For the fifteenth-century poets in Aragon, the same lack of reference to the doctrine in Scripture gave all the more latitude to modern-day interpretations. Finally, the importance of papal intervention, late in the fifteenth century, adds another level of authority and, for certain *certamen* poets, the authority of the Pope had greater value than attempting to square their arguments with those of the Fathers.

Stylistic devices originating from scholastic debate are used with great frequency in Catalan immaculist poems. They construct arguments using indefinite tenses to highlight the possibilities and probabilities of the main tenets of the doctrine being true. There is evidence from the competitions that winning entries were selected on the basis of the strength of their arguments and their usefulness as weapons in the debate against the maculists. It is probable that poets mimicked scholastic style in the way they did because it was relevant to the closed ecclesiastical circles for whom the *certamen* poems were performed, whilst the courtly circles, for which the *cancioneros* were written, valued a differ-

ent type of display of erudition, because that brought recognition from noble and royal patrons.

In these initial chapters, I have taken a new approach to poetic debate, relating it closely to the universities' teaching on the Conception but also to the way that liturgy used authorities. I have shown how poetic debate mirrored theological debate. In the remaining chapters, I will examine how many of the prefigurations distinguished in liturgy were used in poetry. I examine the parts of Scripture which defenders of the doctrine applied most often in poetry. I begin by examining the way in which Mary was prefigured as the Woman, in the Genesis prophecy of a forthcoming battle between her and the serpent. This text was to inspire seventeenth-century artists in their depictions of the doctrine but I will establish how far it had already become a source of inspiration to immaculist poets in the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SERPENT CRUSHED

Munchas vezes se toman en la Santa Escriptura vnas palabras por otras[1]

Throughout the Middle Ages, supporters of the Immaculate Conception relied on hypotheses, based on their own reasoning, to defend its premises (see Chapter 4). Direct scriptural proofs of the doctrine were non-existent, but there were plenty pointing to the universality of sin: 'Mirando al tiempo de la controversia inmaculista, hay que reconocer que los adversarios del dogma se hallaron en mejor posición que sus defensores con respecto al argumento de la Escritura' [examining the time of the immaculist controversy, we have to recognize that, in terms of the argument from Scripture, the opponents of the doctrine were in a better position than the defenders] (Peinador 1955: 55). Biblical proofs of the Conception were not favoured as its principal defence until the very end of the fifteenth century. In this chapter, I will assess how far the Protoevangelium, the momentous struggle between the serpent and the Woman in Genesis 3.15, had a role to play in the imagery used for counterpointing good and evil in medieval poetry.

The Protoevangelium provided theologians with a powerful way of symbolizing the battle between good and evil, prefiguring that of the Gospels: 'Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius: ipsa conteret caput tuum et tu insidiaberis calcaneo eius' [I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; she will crush your head and you will bruise her heel] (Herzenaver 1906: 3).

Use of Genesis as proof of the Immaculate Conception became standard by the late sixteenth century, in the work of artists like Seville artists Bartolomé Estebán Murillo (1618–1682) and Francisco Zurbarán (1598–1664) (Réau 1955–1959: 88), where Mary tramples the serpent

[1] [Many times in Holy Scripture words are used for others]. The words are taken from the Gloss on Gómez Manrique's poem, 'Loores e Suplicaçiones a Nuestra Señora' [Praises and Supplications to Our Lady] (ID 3400) (2003: 287–293, 293).

beneath her feet. This now archetypal representation of Mary's sinlessness was inspired by a detail peculiar to the Vulgate translation of the Bible, which replaces the correct rendering, *ipse* [he crushed], by *ipsa conteret caput tuum* [she crushed your head]. At a stroke, the translation transferred the central role in the struggle to the Woman and marginalized the protagonism of her seed. It also contributed to separating the Woman / Mary from the rest of humanity. As theologians reflected on what might have occasioned the victory of Mary over the serpent, the neat idea that she was exempt from inheriting the sin of Adam and Eve began to develop. The error in the Vulgate favoured the development of a doctrine like the Immaculate Conception which accorded her special favours.

Another way in which artistic representation of the Woman and the serpent developed was by synthesizing it with Revelation 12.1. In many representations of the Immaculate Conception, Mary stands crowned with stars and on the crescent moon, as she tramples the serpent or dragon underfoot, thus taking on the attributes of the Woman of the Apocalyptic vision, the fulfilment of the prophecy in Genesis (Peinador 1955: 70; Guldan 1966: 106–108; Brown et al. 1978: 229; De Fiores & Meo 1988: 368).

> En même temps, les personnages qui sont en jeu et leurs actions se correspondent d'une manière évidente, entre Genèse et l'Apocalypse. De part et d'autre la femme et le serpent-dragon s'opposent; la femme et sa descendance sont haïes par le serpent et sa descendance dans la Genèse […]. Ces resemblances littéraires et verbales sont assez étroites et nombreuses, elles dessinent si exactement les contours essentials des deux scènes que nous pouvons affirmer que *Gen.*, III.15–16 est au point de départ de la vision de l'Apocalypse. (Cerfaux 1955: 26–27)
>
> [The characters and their actions in Genesis and the Apocalypse clearly match. In both, the woman and the dragon-serpent are in opposition; the woman and her seed are hated by the serpent and its issue in Genesis; (…). These literary and verbal resonances sketch out the main elements of the same scene so clearly that it can be said that Genesis III.15–16 forms the starting point of the Apocalypse.]

Despite the close association of the Woman from Revelation and Genesis with the Immaculate Conception in art, at first sight, the prophecy about the Woman, her seed, and the serpent appears to have little to do with Mary's origins. Even those theologians in favour of the Immaculate Conception cannot claim it as a direct proof:

> Que, admitida ya por todos la falta absoluta de texto [bíblico] claro y explícito en pro de este dogma, los textos que se presenten habrán de ser forzosamente oscuros y necesitarán amplia explicación […]. (Peinador 1955: 54)
>
> [For, as all agree, since there is no biblical text which clearly and explicitly supports this doctrine, the texts which do exist are of necessity obscure and require a great deal of critical explanation.]

Ineffabilis Deus uses the Protoevangelium battle to determine the terms of reference of the dogma, setting more emphasis on reflection on it than on clear proof:

> On voit cependant combien lointain est le lien qui rattache au texte scripturaire l'idée de la conception immaculée de la mère du Rédempteur. On part d'une interprétation patristique, où il n'est pas directement question de cette conception, pour en inférer cette doctrine par voie de conséquence logique. (Jugie 1952: 43)
>
> [We can see how distant is the link connecting the idea of the Immaculate Conception of the Redeemer's mother to the biblical text. It takes as its starting point an interpretation of the text by the Church Fathers, which is not directly about the Conception, so as to infer the doctrine as a logical consequence.]

At the end of the twentieth century, Catholic theologians prefer to hedge their bets, asserting that the text is a prefiguration of Christ or of his mother (De Fiores & Meo 1988: 620). In discussion of the doctrine during the early decades of the twentieth century, it was argued that the early Fathers of the Church identify the Woman with Mary and the seed with Christ: 'Nombreux sont les Pères des premiers siècles, qui, dans le lignage de la femme, vainqueur du démon, ont vu Jésus-Christ, né de la Vierge Marie' [Many are the Fathers in the early centuries of Christianity, who, in the lineage of the woman, conqueror of the devil, have seen Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary]. Despite this assertion, Le Bachelet admits that the numerous references that he finds in their work are not defences of the doctrine: 'La plupart n'ont touché au texte qu'en passant, par voie d'allusion ou de supposition' [Most of them only touch on the text in passing, by way of allusion or inference] (1909–1922: VII, cols 853–854).

Early Theologians' Interpretation of the Protoevangelium

The early Fathers in the Peninsula took different standpoints on the figure of the Woman. In commentary on St Isidore of Seville (560–636), theologians acknowledge that his understanding is far from the modern one: 'En el *ipsa* no vuelve ya a verse directamente a María ni se insiste en la victoria sobre el pecado, sino más bien a la muerte' [Christ's Mother is not yet seen in the *ipsa*, nor is there any insistence on victory over sin, but rather over death] (Solano 1954: 134; for an overview of how St Isidore interpreted biblical prefigurations of Mary in his *Etymologies*, see Díez Merino 1990: 136–140).

St Ildephonse identifies the Woman with Mary but he still presents the battle between good and evil as a battle between the serpent and the man who took flesh in the Virgin's womb:

> Hanc figurae salvationis summam per gloriam Virginis signavit species mulieris, quando dictum est ad serpentem: *Inimicitias ponam inter te et inter semen eius* (Gen.3.15); significans malitiam diabolicae partis non posse inhaerere sacramento redemptionis, quod factum est per assumptum hominem ex utero Virginis. (*Annotationum de cognitione baptismi*, praef. c.8, PL 96, 114C)
>
> [When the serpent is told: 'I will put enmity between you and her seed' (Gen 3.15), the type 'woman' signified, to the great glory of the Virgin, that of the figure of salvation; meaning the evil of the devil cannot wound the sacrament of redemption which comes into being through a man taking flesh in the womb of the Virgin.]

Solano highlights how St Ildephonse regards the Virgin Birth as the high point of salvation history. St Ildephonse considers that it is there that victory over the serpent was both complete and Christ's alone: 'Hoc de Christo, qui est fructus virginalis ventris Mariae, intelligitur' [This is to be understood as being about Christ, who is the fruit of the Virgin Mary's womb] (PL 96, 114 C–D). Reflecting on his words, Solano notes that the 'centro de gravedad está desplazado hacia Cristo' [centre of gravity is displaced towards Christ] (1955: 144). It could be argued that Solano's expectation that Mary should be recognized in the female figure shows a centre of gravity displaced towards Mary.

It was in the fifteenth century that St Ildephonse became established as a defender of the Immaculate Conception, with Catalan theologian Peter Thomas the first to name him as one (1665: Lib. 1, 2a pars, cap. III, 221). In part, the confusion arose because of the feast St Ildephonse had instituted, the Conception. As explained in chapter 2, theologians

believed he had established a feast for Mary's Conception, rather than one dedicated to Christ's (Lamy 2000: 516, 519). Nogarolis's office at the end of the century includes a selection from Ildephonse's writings, at the third reading, first night prayer, and aided in inflating the degree of support he expressed for it (see, for example, BC 1043, fol. 14^{v}).

One of the best-known texts based on the contrast between the serpent and Mary is from Origen (185–232), one of the Greek Fathers. His statement about the way in which Mary had escaped the wiles of the serpent was associated with the defence of the doctrine and was disseminated through the liturgy: 'Que neque serpentis: preseruatione decepta nec eius venenosis afflantibus infecta' [for she was not deceived because of being preserved nor was she infected by the breath of the poisonous serpent] (BC 1043: fol. 15^{r}). His opposition between Mary's purity and the corruption of the serpent was among the citations which form the fourth reading at second night prayer in Nogarolis's Conception office.

The Genesis prefiguration of Mary was already being associated with Juan de Segovia's Conception office in 1440, where it is found as an antiphon at third night prayer: 'Gaude maria uirgo que contritura caput diaboli illi per culpa nunquam subiecta fuisti' [Rejoice, Mary, Virgin, who crushed the head of the devil and were never subject to him through sin] (*Breviarium gerundense* [ACG 125], fol. 6^{v}). It is found in Toledo Conception offices at first night prayer: 'Cui eua obediuit hec serpentis caput triuit iugum spernens nupciarum deo uouit celibatum' [She crushed the head of the serpent, whom Eve obeyed, spurning the yoke of marriage and vowing celibacy to God].[2] The battle of Mary and the serpent had a long mariological tradition but also had become closely allied to the Conception through the liturgy by the time the first vernacular poets began to use it in the Peninsula.

Early Marian Poems and the Protoevangelium

Early literature in Spain is marked by devotion to the Virgin and by association of her with the Protoevangelium. Berceo, Alfonso the Wise, and Juan Ruiz associate Mary with the Woman of the Protoevangelium. In the *Loores*, Berceo contrasts the serpent and Adam with Eve and

[2] See *Breviarium toletanum* (ACT, 33.6), fol. 451^{v}, *Breviarium toletanum* (ACT 33.9), fol. 515^{r}, *Breviario romano y suplemento al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN 186), fol. 424^{r}, *Breviario de Segovia* (ACS B288), fol. 310^{v}, *Breviarium secundum consuetudinem ecclesie segobiensis*

the Jews with Mary to construct a double axis. It is speech, 'sermones arteros' [wily speeches], which links the serpent to the Jews, implied by the epithet 'falsos lesongeros'. The two are linked also through the rhyme scheme ('arteros', 'falsos lesongeros'):

> Quand decibió la sierpe los parientes primeros
> e los sacó de seso con sermones arteros
> de ti ·s temieron luego los falsos lesongeros,
> mas non fueron del tiempo nin la ora certeros. (1975: 73, ll.4a–4d)
>
> [When the serpent deceived Adam and Eve
> and led them astray with wily speeches
> the false tricksters were afraid of you,
> but they were not sure of when you would come.]

Berceo evokes the battle but the two opponents are reconfigured. Instead of an Old Testament battle, he creates a New Testament battle to mirror it. His condemnation of the Jews through association with the serpent in this passage is one example among many of his sly anti-semitism. For example, Berceo attacks the Jews in *El duelo de la Virgen* and his criticism again focuses on their speech: 'Judíos e paganos faciéndoli bocines, / dando mal respendos como malos rocines,' [Jews and Pagans shouting at him, with awful braying like broken-down nags] (1975: 24, ll.50a–b). Another of the *Milagros*, entitled 'Christo y los Judíos de Toledo', characterizes the Jews as treacherous, deaf, and blind:

> Fablólis voz del Cielo, dolient e qerellosa,
> 'Oíd'—dixo—'christianos una estranna cosa
> la gent de judaísmo, sorda e cegajosa
> nunqua contra don Christo non fo mas porfidiosa.' (139, ll.416a–d)
>
> [A voice from heaven spoke to them, sorrowing and plaintive,
> 'Hear, Christians', it said, 'a strange affair,
> for the Jewish people, deaf and blind,
> have never been more perfidious towards Christ.']

In his contrast between the time of the Fall and his contemporary experience, Berceo exploits a rich typological vein of paralleling the Old World Order with the New (Boreland 1983: 26). According to Helen Boreland, the parallel reaches to the heart of medieval miracle collec-

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(ACS B272), fol. 171^{r}, *Breviarium urgellense* (ACSU incunable 147), fol. 313^{v}, *Breviario de Toledo adaptado al uso del convento de Uclés* (BN 8902), fol. 326^{r}, *Breviario romano al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN 9082), fols. 716^{v}–717^{r}, *Breviario de Toledo* (BB 2), fol. 243^{v}, *Breviario de Osma* (ACBO 2B), fol. 382^{r}.

tions. Michael E. Gerli makes the same point, arguing that opposition of good and evil is deeply linked to how miracle collections are conceived for each of the miracles mirrors the story of the Fall and the path to Redemption: 'Cada milagro de la colección repite esta idea básica, pero en miniatura, en una forma menos abstracta y más particularizada' [Each miracle in the collection repeats this basic idea, but in miniature, in a less abstract manner and with more individual detail] (1985: 13). His commentary on the introduction is, however, marred by the way he confuses Mary's conception of Christ, the Virginal Conception, and the Immaculate Conception, Mary's own conception in her mother's womb (1985: 11). Berceo is writing about the former.

Defeat of the devil is more closely connected to interventions on behalf of individual sinners than to any theoretical conquering of original sin in both Berceo's and Alfonso's collection. The Virgin rescues human beings, even though they may be unworthy: 'e perdon nos gaará / e ao demo vencerá' [pardon you will gain for us and the devil you will vanquish] (1959–1964: 157, II, ll.20–21).

In the *Milagros*, Mary is a feisty opponent to the devil. She locks in physical combat with him in miracles like 'El monge beodo' [The Squinting Monk]:

> Empezóli a dar de grandes palancadas,
> non podién las menudas escuchar las granadas,
> lazrava el león a buenas dinaradas
> non ovo en sus días las cuestas tan sovadas. (1980: 153, ll.478a–d)
>
> [She began to give him great blows with a staff,
> the little ones could not hear the big ones,
> she well and truly wounded the lion.
> He had never had his sides so sore.]

In Berceo's *Loores*, Satan is ranged with the triple forces of evil, which embattle humankind. Berceo depicts life's journey and its pitfalls for the unwary. On one side is the world and the flesh, aided by the devil, and, on the other, the Virgin, advocate for fallen humanity:

> Persíguennos, Sennora, grandes enemiztades,
> contra nos es el mundo, con sus adversidades,
> ayuda·l el dïablo con muchas falsedades,
> con ellos tien la carne con falsas voluntades.
> Entre tantos periglos, ¿qui podrié guarecer?
> Si nos non vales, Madre, podémosnos perder; (1975: 108–109, ll.222a–223b)

> [Great enemy forces are pursuing us, Lady,
> against us is the world with its adversities,
> and supporting it is the devil with many false words,
> with those two stands the flesh with false desires.
> In so many dangers, who could provide a cure?
> If you do not aid us, Mother, we may be lost;]

Berceo's *Milagros* parallel the Old Creation with the New on different levels. The prologue sets the whole collection in the context of a beautiful *locus amoenus* (1980: 29–34), which concurrently represents Eden before the Fall, Paradise, the miracle collection, and Mary's pure body:

> El poeta desea establecer la clara tipología entre el mundo de la Vieja Ley, el del pecado y el de Adán y Eva, y el de la Nueva Ley, el de la posibilidad de la salvación del Pecado Original por el medio de Cristo y el instrumento humano de su advenimiento, su madre. (Gerli 1985: 11)
>
> [The poet wants to set out a clear typology contrasting the world of the Old Law, that of sin and of Adam and Eve, and that of the New Law, where there is the possibility of salvation from original sin through the medium of Christ and the human instrument of his coming, his mother.]

Berceo's use of the *locus amoenus* has been the focus of much commentary from Hispano-medievalists, amongst others, Carmelo Gariano (1965: 30–31), Keller (1972: 52–60), Gerli (1985), Juan Antonio Ruiz Domínguez (1990: 31), Patricia Grieve (1993: 215, 218–220), Deyermond (2003: 121), and Juan Carlos Bayo (2005: 56–58). His typological approach follows a Christian tradition already established during New Testament times (Auerbach 1984: 28–49). The *Milagros* are frequently edited and most editors take the opportunity to comment on the introduction, including Dutton (Berceo 1980: 36–45) and Vicente Beltrán (Berceo 1987: l–li). The consensus is that the meadow Berceo describes in his prologue is not only a representation of Mary's body but is also the *hortus conclusus* [the enclosed garden], which can be read as a symbol of her unblemished virginity:

> El fructo de los árbores era dulz e sabrido,
> si don Adam oviesse de tal fructo comido
> de tal mala manera non serié decibido
> Nin tomarién tal danno Eva nin so marido. (1980: 31, ll.15a–d)
>
> [The fruit of the trees was sweet and luscious;
> if Lord Adam had eaten such fruit
> he would not be deceived in such an evil manner
> nor would Eve or her husband have come to such harm.]

Allusions to the Protoevangelium give no indication that Berceo is attempting to illustrate the Immaculate Conception. The principal emphasis in the *Milagros* is on the Annunciate Virgin and for Patricia Grieve this is the reason why the miracle about St Ildephonse and how he moved the feast of the Annunciation to December is given such prominence (1993: 227). Berceo seems unaware of the existence of the Immaculate Conception and this is probably the case, since the earliest records of its celebration in Spain are found after his death, in the early thirteenth century, in the kingdom of Aragon.

The purpose of Alfonso the Wise's miracle collection is also to illustrate the opposition between good and evil at the hub of human life. In the lyric poems in his *Cantigas*, the Virgin is portrayed engaging in physical combat on behalf of mankind against the devil: 'Sempr' estás lidando / por nos a perfia / o dem' arrancando' [you are always fighting / for us and pulling the devil away] (1959–1964: I, 60, ll.20–22). Alfonso links the destruction of the forces of evil to the moment of the Annunciation and the Incarnation, as can be seen in *Cantiga* 90:

> Sola fusti, senlleira,
> u Grabiel creviste,
> e ar sen conpanneira
> u a Deus concebiste
> e per esta maneira
> o demo destroiste. (1959–1964: I, 260, ll.4–9)
>
> [You were alone, exceptional one,
> when you believed Gabriel,
> and without companion
> when you conceived God
> and, in this way,
> you destroyed the devil.][3]

He emphasizes the singularity of the Virgin, as well as her three-stage defeat of the devil: 'creviste […] concebiste […] destroiste'. She did this through her belief and through her conception. However, he considers that the serpent was defeated at Christ's hands: 'e veo-sse fazer / nov' Adan que britasse a cabeça do dragon' [and a new Adam was created who broke the head of the dragon] (1959–1964: III, 51, ll.21–22).

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[3] The same desire to parallel the Annunciation with the actions of Eve can be seen in *Cantiga* 60: 'Eva nos foi deitar / do dem' en sa prijon, / e Ave en sacar […]' [Eve left us in the prison of the devil, and Ave brought us out] (60.10). There is nothing in the poem to suggest an immaculist overtone to the Eve-Mary parallel. The parallel between the two is discussed in Chapter 9.

Early medieval Hispanic literature has another important poetic text with a small number of Marian poems, the 'heterogeneous' *LBA*. The most recent scholarship on the *LBA* does not try to create any unified purpose for it (Haywood & Vasvári 2004), allowing it to stand with its comic interludes, *exempla*, Marian invocations, and *serranillas* [rustic songs], and seeing it as a 'patchwork of anomalies, ambiguities, inconsistencies, ironies, and pitfalls for its interpreters' (Deyermond 2004: 108). Vasvári (2004) shows that it belongs to a European tradition of similar works.

Ruiz's 'Ave María' sets the conflict between the serpent and Mary on a spiritual plane:

> *Benedictus fructus*, folgura
> e salvaçión
> del linaje umanal,
> que tiraste la tristura
> e perdición,
> que por nuestro esquivo mal
> el dïablo, suzio tal,
> con su obra engañosa,
> en [la] cárçel peligrosa
> ya ponía. (1983: 246, ll.1666a–j)
>
> [Blessed the fruit, joy
> and salvation of the human race
> for you cast aside its sadness and perdition,
> for it was in dangerous imprisonment
> which the devil, foul creature,
> imposed
> with his trickery
> because of our sly wrong-doing.]

Ruiz depicts human nature's subjection to original sin as an imprisonment, from which it was rescued by the fruit of Mary's womb at the Incarnation. Even though he refers to the Virgin as 'sancta flor non tañida' [holy unblemished flower] in the following stanza (246, l.1667a), it is clear that he intends to show Mary as *Virgo intacta*, unsullied by childbirth. He never suggests she is exempt from the serpent's power because of preservation from original sin. It is true, however, that he points to Mary's co-operation in the act of defeating the serpent, both 'diablo' and 'suzio tal', and this shows that his interpretation of the Protoevangelium is not purely christological. In the *LBA*, Mary acts, she brings about the Incarnation, and she puts aside the sadness of the human race. The nature of the conflict is made all the more poignant

in that it stands in opposition to the remainder of the *LBA*, where *exempla* point to human folly, sin, and weakness.

Late Medieval Valencian Poetry: The Battle-Ground of the Immaculate Moment

Many poets took the hypothesis that Mary might have been conceived in original sin as their starting point and followed Scotus in pointing to the more fitting option of immaculacy. They used references to the Genesis prophecy to underpin the argument. All the poems have an immaculist macro-context because they are entries to the 1486 *certamen*.

Arnau de Cors uses a range of conditional tenses, such as 'fósseu', imitating scholastic disquisition. He sets the argument from fittingness in the context of the Virgin's failure to vanquish Satan, with the logical conclusion that she was subject to him for an instant:

> Romp-se mon cor pensant cosa tan fera
> que sols un punt, verge, de vós se diga
> fósseu jamés sots la taqua primera,
> que·n tal instant del Sathan presonera
> seríeu vós y de Déu inimiga. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 463, ll.73–77)
>
> [May my heart break, thinking such a shocking thought,
> that just for one short instant, Virgin, you may be held
> to have ever been subject to the first stain,
> for, in such a moment, you would be
> prisoner of Satan and enemy of God.]

De Cors is contesting the Dominican approach of how Mary was accorded grace through sanctification, and the way in which their rejection of the Conception doctrine was often reduced to the question of one instant, 'sols un punt'. They were prevented from believing it by the single instant in which Mary had been subject to original sin, holding that God cleansed her only after infusion of her rational soul. De Cors rejects the possibility that she could have been sinful for one instant and considers that imprisonment even for one second was unthinkable.

Bernat Fenollar (1435–1516), a Valencian, probably from a *converso* family, was chaplain and chapel master by 1479 to King Fernando el Católico of Aragon. Fenollar was one of the most distinguished literary figures in Valencia in the second half of the fifteenth century, although he is a second-rate poet (Ferrando Francés 1983: 173). He is

best known for his *Passi en cobles* [Rhymed Passion], dedicated to Isabel de Villena. Fenollar, like de Cors combines rhetorical questions with the implications of 'aquell instant' [that moment]. The subjugation of the Virgin for that one moment is set in contrast with her victory over the serpent:

> Car si us fos gens, aquell instant seríeu,
> del Fill absent, vassalla del diable.
> ¿Com se pot fer, vós sola que devíeu
> rompre·l seu cap, a vós, que tant valíeu,
> l'agués romput aquell tan detestable? (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 491–492, ll.18–22)
>
> [For if you were (defeated) in any way, in that instant you would be
> out of reach of your Son, a vassal of the devil.
> How could it be, that you alone who were to crush
> his head, might have had such a hateful being
> crush your head, who are so noble?]

De Cors speculates on two possible outcomes of Mary's subjugation, that she would have been 'presonera' and 'inimiga'. 'Inimiga' hints at conflict, but when the poet combines it with 'taqua' [stain] (l.75), it recalls the '*amica mea*' of the Song of Songs. In this way, he combines two biblical prefigurations of the Immaculate Conception. Unlike de Cors, who stops at allusion, Fenollar adapts the prophecy *Ipsa conteret caput tuum* from the Protoevangelium. Whereas de Cors refers what would have happened had Mary been subjugated by Satan for one instant, Fenollar uses 'vassalla' to express the same idea in feudal terms. He places it in apposition to 'del Fill absent' [out of reach of your Son] and expresses it as a separation from God. He argues that had she been in fiefdom to Satan for one instant, she would have been crushed by him: 'l'agués romput' [he would have crushed (your head)].

Many of the Valencian poets, like de Cors or like Vivot, are emotive in their rejection of the maculist viewpoint. De Cors expresses his dismay at it in 'romp-se mon cor' [may my heart break]. Vivot's poem expresses utter shock at the idea that the Virgin could have been defeated by the devil: 'Sols de pensar-hi, senyora molt sancta, / tremole'm l'esforç y pert lo seny meu' [Just thinking of it, most holy Lady, my strength trembles and I lose my senses] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 472, ll.25–26). Vivot is openly immaculist and his fainting dismay springs from a courtly approach to his Lady, whom he terms totally pure and perfect. He attests from the first stanza 'que may no tengués culp· original' [that original sin was never in you] and supports the

statement with a variety of arguments. The Old Order represented by Adam and Eve is set against the New with Mary and Christ:[4]

> ¿Qui us gos· inculpar de nengun peccat?
> Y vós, la qual sou nostra panonera,
> que dels inimichs seguint la bandera
> may hajeu estat
> del gran Lucifer sots la potestat. (472, ll.20–24)
>
> [Who wants to implicate you in any sin?
> and you, who are our standard-bearer,
> who following the pennant of the enemy
> never have been
> under the power of Lucifer.]

Many of the poets use military imagery to characterize the Virgin and Vivot employs 'standard-bearer', 'enemy', and 'pennant'. His purpose is to emphasize that the conflict between the Virgin and Satan is a bloody battle in which quarter is not given. Calling the Virgin standard-bearer emphasizes her position in the ranks, placing her in a prominent position in the battle-lines, where she will be under attack, singling her out on the battlefield. Vivot develops his argument in the following stanza, rejecting the idea that the Virgin could ever have been in the power of Lucifer:

> que vós, qui teniu senyoria tanta,
> lo príncep d'infern, qui de vós se espanta,
> sots lo poder seu
> tenguda us hagués ¡o mare de Déu! (472–473, ll.27–30)
>
> [That the prince of darkness,
> who trembles at your sight,
> might have held you, so noble
> under his power, o Mother of God!]

---

[4] The sixth stanza of the poem argues that if Mary was free from venial sin, which is the lesser type, then it would be logical for her to be free from original sin:

> Que si ·l crim menor vostre Fill benigne
> de vós ha ·partat qui ·s tot poderós,
> més vol la rahó que ·l peccat maligne,
> qui d'infern entrar a qui ·l té fa digne,
> alunya's de vós. (473, ll.67–71)
>
> [For if lesser crime has been put away from you
> by your Son, who is all powerful,
> rather does reason expect that the evil sin
> which makes anyone who has it fit to enter hell
> should be kept away from you.]

He then turns to reaction of the serpent, fear, when confronted by his assailant. It is not directly part of the Genesis prophecy but emerges naturally from its impending defeat. The structure of Vivot's poem makes it limpid and flowing. The sustaining of various concepts supporting the Immaculate Conception, together with the way they are assumed into scholastic arguments, creates a coherent whole. Ferrando Francés is dismissive of Vivot's poem in his edition, stressing that the verses are 'remarcablement fàcils, però no fan sinó repetir els coneguts tòpics immaculistes' [remarkably flowing, but they only repeat well-known immaculist topoi] (1983: 419). Vivot hoped that God would grant him sharpness of wit, but he does not intend that his wit should be put to use creating new images of the Immaculate Conception. He uses it rather in constructing arguments to support the doctrine. His often repeated immaculist *topoi* should be interpreted as part of his desire to defer to authority, in the same way that theologians deferred to the Fathers in their work.

Jaume Roig defers to a different tradition in his *Espill*. Roig has often been thought to be successor to a tradition of misogynist writing in the kingdom of Aragon (Cantavella 1992: 40), although Archer's recent study challenges the assumption that there was ever a debate about women (2005). Into his comparison between other women and Mary, Roig weaves condemnation of Eve, unrepentant and solely responsible for the Fall. He then moves to a diatribe against all women except the Virgin, set apart by her freedom from original sin. The following section of the narrative, dedicated to her praise, is shot through with different types of Conception signifiers, including Genesis allusions and hypothetical argument. Roig's skill is in showing how they can be interwoven:

> Es lo fort mur
> de la defensa contra l'ofensa
> de l'enemic, puix lo castic
> d'ella'l rebé. Esta'l vencé
> ab puritat. Contra el peccat
> és pugnadora. Com pecadora
> ésser podia? Déu, qui hu sabia,
> tal la volgué, volent pogué
> fer-la tan neta tota perfeta
> i tal prevista ans de la vista
> del nostre crim. (1978: 158)
>
> [She is the strong wall
> of defence against the attack

of the enemy, since her chasteness
drives him back.
She conquers him
with purity. Against sin,
she is a fighter. How could she
be a sinner? God who knew her
wanted her thus, and wanting was able
to make her so clean, so perfect
and so foreseen before the sight
of our crime.]

Roig intersperses these immaculist allusions with military imagery inherent in lexical items, such as 'enemich', 'pugnadora', 'defensa', and 'ofensa', and in so doing he ranks the Virgin among those who oppose sin in its personification as the enemy. Roig then turns to a rhetorical question: 'Com pecadora ésser podia?' [how could she be a sinner], and counters it with an argument recalling defence of the Immaculate Conception by university teachers: 'Déu qui hu sabia / tal la volgué volent pogué / fer-la tan neta' [God who knew it, wanted her thus, and wanting was able to make her so clean] (1978: 158). Scholastic argumentation, apparent in 'volgué' [wanted] and 'volent pugué' [wanting, could] (see above, Chapter 4), also underpins the reference to Genesis 3.15. Roig skilfully interweaves biblical and scholastic allusion in his argument.

Whilst Roig is a skilled poet, other poems in the *certamen* collections are very unequal in poetic quality. Jerònim Fuster's is one of the more accomplished entries and is the best of several which address the struggle between good and evil, juxtaposing references to Old and New Testament. Fuster was a Master of Theology and one of the most influential churchmen of his day, occupying the post of Vicar General for Valencia diocese. Fuster's poem was the winning entry in the category 'ràdix Jessé' in the *certamen*. The use he makes of the Genesis prophecy is particularly striking. He counterpoints Adam's rebellious nature, 'el primer rebel·le' [the first rebel] with the Virgin's, showing that the Virgin is a more worthy enemy for the serpent than Adam:

Si del primer rebel·le, nostre pare,
la roba fon de terra pura y santa
y en dignitat aquell no s'acompare
ab vós, homil, que sou divina mare,
y ell enemich ab supèrbia tanta,
més excel·lent y en major grau la vostra
devia ser. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 439, ll.37–43)

[If the robe of the first rebel, our father,
was of pure and holy earth,
and, in dignity, he cannot be compared
with you, humble lady, who are Mother of God,
and the enemy with such pride
must be your enemy to a higher degree
and more fully.]

Fuster links the Protoevangelium battle with the victory of Christ on the Cross. The Vulgate translation is uppermost in Fuster's mind, and causes a double focus. He pictures Mary standing alongside her Son, undefeated by the serpent: 'no us pogué lo diable fer guerra' [the devil could not make war on you]. Fuster sees the crushing of the serpent by the Woman and Crucifixion victory as two sides of the same coin (l.57). He creates a double conflict: 'la primera luyta' [the first battle] refers back to the Protoevangelium, whilst the final one between the serpent and the offspring of the New Eve, Mary, is inferred. It is the one being played out on the cross. Christ's victory on the Cross is the ultimate defeat for the serpent but has become dependent on the prophecy about the Woman's victory.[5] According to Balič, a similar lack of emphasis on the redemptive power of the cross is a feature of Ramón Llull's exposition of the Immaculate Conception (1958: 201). The prefiguration of Mary by the Genesis prophecy has the effect of marginalizing the figure on the Cross, since the defeat of the devil has already been accomplished by the Woman:

Fogiren tots los altres ab gran cuyta,
car no us pogué lo diable fer guerra,
puix lo seu cap y tota la desferra
vós li rompés en la primera luyta. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 439–440, ll.55–58)

[All the others fled with great concern
for the devil could not make war on you,
since his head and his full downfall
you crushed in the first battle.]

Fuster's focus on final defeat also takes account of the battle-lines drawn in the controversy over the Immaculate Conception. He decries its opponents, who deny her rightful title, and he bases his rejection of their views on the defeat of Satan: 'És maldient lo ver títol que us

[5] Present-day theologians consider that there is a clear reference to Genesis in John's Gospel, when Christ addresses his Mother as 'Woman' from the cross (Brown, Donfried, Fitzmyer, & Reumann 1978).

negua / puix que vençés del gran Satan la bregua' [He who denies you the true title speaks ill, / since you conquered the breach of mighty Satan] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 440, ll.71–72). 'Lo ver títol' [true title] refers to the Immaculate Conception.

Ferrando Díeç, in a similar way to Fuster, sets his references to the conflict between the Virgin and Satan firmly within the context of the economy of salvation. He argues that by necessity, Mary should be exempt from sin, as that enables her to fulfil her role in redemption:

> Per noble fer l'ome qu· era tan fràgil
> prengué la carn Jhesús, Salvador nostre.
> Donchs fon mester sa mare ser exemta
> del que féu l'om perdent los drets seus nobles,
> puix recobrats, per ella ser havien. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 526, ll.31–35)

> [To make man noble, who was so weak,
> Jesus, our Saviour, took flesh.
> So it was necessary for his mother to be exempt
> from the act that man committed, when he lost his rights to nobility,
> since, through her, they have been recovered.]

Díeç sets the Fall, which caused man to lose his 'drets seus nobles' [rights to nobility], in a feudal context. Díeç's interpretation of the effects of the Fall in Genesis 3.17, include a particular emphasis on manual labour. Díeç sees the effects of the Fall in a contrast between nobility and servitude: the noble is not required to work and the vassal is. Through the Virgin, those lost rights were recovered. Nobility is restored through the Incarnation but the Virgin's role in it is dependent on the purity of her flesh, which can only be assured through the Immaculate Conception.

The confrontation between the Woman and Satan is made dependent on her freedom from original sin and Díeç goes on to argue that pre-redemption was the means by which the purity of her flesh was achieved:

> Rem-la son Fill, que ·ls tals ella no perda,
> que ·n tot moment en puritat s'estengua,
> ni que ·l Satan trenque sols una squerda
> d'asta semblant, tenyida ab color verde,
> rompent-li ·l cap, que spera ·n Fill Déu prengua. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 526, ll.36–40)

> [Her Son redeemed her, so she did not lose them (her rights),
> that her purity might moment by moment be increased,
> nor might Satan burst forth on the flank

like a spear, stained with green,
crushing her head, that hope might be taken in the Son of God.]

His version of the battle is vivid and action-packed compared to many other static references to it in *certamen* poetry.

Johan Sent Climent, writing for the 1474 *certamen*, gives a new twist to the Genesis prophecy, setting the defeat of the serpent in the context of the battle against the heretic Moors in the south of Spain. Little is known about Sent Climent except that he was a 'naïper', a maker of playing-cards, and, thus, a member of the bourgeoisie. It is possible that he was of Catalan extraction, because of the existence of a poem by a Sent Climent in the *Cançoner de Barberà* (Ferrando Francés 1983: 205). Sent Climent's topic was an important one to the Church in contemporary Valencia. Fuster, together with two other important Churchmen, Joan Sala, Canon of Lerida and a Fr. Soler, Vicar of the Valencia Chapter, produced a report *Confusion de la secta mahometana* in 1515 (Ferrando Francés 1983: 389). Sent Climent combines biblical references with contemporary anti-Moorish sentiments.

Condemnation of opponents of the doctrine is a regular feature of immaculist poetry. For example, Fuster condemns those who doubt the victory of the Virgin over the serpent (440, ll.71–72). I have already discussed condemnation of opponents through association with heresy in Chapter 4 and, in Chapter 6, I discuss condemnation of the maculists. Sent Climent cares little whether the doubters are opponents of the new doctrine or infidel Moors: 'E qui dirà "yo hu dubte" / de paradís no veurà may la cambra' [and whoever says I doubt it / will never see the chamber of Paradise] (303, ll.29–30).[6] In later *certàmens*, it is the Turks who are identified as the heretics Mary opposes.

Preoccupation with evil in the shape of the infidel allows Sent Climent to take a further step. Those who do not believe the doctrine will be like converts to Islam: 'Aquests seran semblants dels qui la secta / de Mahomet han tengut en lo segle' [They will be similar to those who the sect of Mohammed / has won over on earth] (303, ll.31–32). Sent Climent's anti-Moorish sentiments are threaded through the poem. In the first stanza, the poet asks for protection from 'aquella mala

[6] The focus on doubt in the poem recalls that expressed by the maculist poet, Diego Martínez de Medina, who declares himself ready to doubt: 'yo dubdo, mas non creo' [I doubt but I do not believe] (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 578, l.72). The poetic doubt has the scholastic sense of seeking to deepen understanding.

secta' [that evil sect]: 'Que ·m guardeu d'aquella mala secta / dels peccadors, qui són ferits de verga' [may she keep me from that evil sect / of sinners, who are wounded with the lance] (302, ll.3–4). Sent Climent explains 'secta' in the second stanza: 'Vós confoneu de Mahomet la secta' [you confound Mohammed's sect] (303, l.14). The fourth stanza prefigures Gospel events and another Marian feast, the Presentation:

> No us ha pogut fer nafrar la vostr· arma
> lo vil Satan ab la seu cruel vergua,
> d'aquell peccat original, que ·ls òrphens
> fels cristians són guardats del sepulcre
> de l'infern brau. (303, ll.25–29)
>
> [Vile Satan with his cruel rod
> has not been able to pierce your soul
> with original sin, for the orphan Christians
> are kept from the tomb
> of savage hell.]

'Pierce your soul' echoes Simeon's words (Luke 2.35), 'vos travessarà l'arma' [will pierce your soul] (303, l.24), in *encadenación* [repetition of part or all of the last line of a stanza within the first line of the following one]. Blending of Genesis and Gospel reference occurs again in 'no us ha pogut nafrar vostra arma' [has not been able to pierce your soul]. Instead of bruising the heel of the Virgin, the serpent or Satan, seeks to bruise her soul with original sin: 'ab sa cruel vergua / d'aquel peccat original' [with his cruel rod / of original sin]. 'Vergua' [Cruel rod] of Satan echoes the 'ferits de verga' [wounded by the lance] of the first stanza, now explicitly identified with original sin. Exegesis of Simeon's prophecy usually associates it with the Crucifixion and, therefore, the allusion to the final battle is suggested by 'ferits'. The 'rod' recalls the lance of Díeç's poem but also the piercing of Christ.

The poem creates many parallels which are less felicitous. Sent Climent's *encadenación* initially appears clever but becomes pedestrian because a number of words, such as 'sepulchre', 'orphens', 'secte', and 'chambre', recur tastelessly: 'l'infernal sepulcre' [the infernal sepulchre] becomes 'mal sepulcre' [evil sepulchre], and even 'l'orrible sepulcre' [awful sepulchre]. The epithet is even applied to the Virgin: 'Verge sen par, d'omilitat sepulcre' [Peerless Virgin, tomb of humility] (303, l.9):

> L'artificiositat inherent a la sextina i la incessant repetició de les velles metàfores laudatòries marianes de la poesia trobadoresca donen a la

> composició de Sentcliment un marcat caràcter arcaïtzant. (Ferrando Francés 1983: 240)[7]
>
> [The type of artifice inherent in the six-lined verse form and the constant repetition of ancient metaphors in praise of Mary from troubadour poetry gives Sent Climent's poem a marked sense of being deliberately old-fashioned].

The poet's technique is imperfect, but the strength of his opinion and the poem's contribution to defence of the Immaculate Conception make it worthy of consideration.

Military imagery is used differently by Tallante. His poem (ID 6046) is an entry for the ruby category in the 1486 *certamen*. It is dedicated to the freedom of the Virgin from original sin and begins by emphasizing the military defences, which protect her:

> Pues virgen celeste, de gracias repleta,
> si ricas defensas sostienen tu lía,
> qualquier aduersario que punge porfia
> sujeto le hace su malvada seta. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 481; in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 119, ll.9–12)
>
> [So, heavenly Virgin, full of graces,
> such strong defences holds firm your bounds,
> any adversary who reeks of trickery
> is made subject by his evil philosophy.][8]

Tallante employs 'qualquier aduersario' not only to refer to the serpent but also to the opponents of the Conception doctrine. It is the maculists who Tallante associates with the devil, because they do not admit that the Immaculate Conception is true. Tallante refers to them as 'seta', which Covarrubias interprets as doctrine or philosophy (1943: 892). Through 'sujeto', Tallante recalls the Genesis battle between the Woman and the serpent, in which the serpent is crushed under her heel. Using the same technique which Berceo had used to draw the Jews into the Genesis battle in the *Loores*, Tallante, in his second stanza widens the cosmological battle to earthly battle over the doctrine. The

[7] Sent Climent has clearly chosen the style and language advisedly, since in the *Endreça* he refers to troubadour conventions: 'Jutges valents qui manteniu la cambra / del Gay Saber, tramet vers novell d'òrphens' [valiant judges, who uphold the chamber of troubadour poetry, new verses pass through from orphans] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 304, ll.41–42).

[8] I have reproduced the version from the *Trobes en lahors de la Verge Maria*.

connection Tallante makes between opponents of the doctrine and Satan is very similar to the one in Fuster's poem (see above, p. 90):

> Los tales combates te dan de la tierra,
> e son de conceptos que rige mal zelo,
> y tu permaneçes por libre ·n el çielo
> y sus presupuestos fenecen en guerra […]. (ll.13–16)
>
> [Such conflict is given you from the earth
> and they are about concepts which evil zeal dominates;
> and you remain free in heaven
> and their proposals end in war.]

Tallante seeks to show that the Virgin is above the level of thinking of her opponents, thus remaining 'por libre en el cielo' [free in heaven], untouched by their limited version of the truth. Opponents of the doctrine are firmly placed in the adversary's camp, since he takes delight in their opposing views and seeks to strengthen their unfounded opinions:

> que desquel p[ro]terbo *qu*al*qu*ier dubda affierra
> en entricaciones de falsa opinion
> jamas se desuia de contradicion
> hincando las presas alli do sencierra […] (ll.17–20)[9]
>
> [For as soon as the evil one strengthens any doubt
> intertwined with false opinion,
> he never departs from contradiction,
> setting traps where people are ensnared.]

[9] The version presented in the *certamen* is slightly different due to reversal of ll.17 and 21:

> que quando l·inorme de fe se destierra
> y apunta decretos de condemnación,
> jamás de savía la contradición
> fincando las presas adonde s·encierra.
> Y des que ·l proterbo qualquier duda fierra,
> maguer que ya sea untado de crisma,
> en aquellas partes que prende de çisma,
> allí s·adormece, se pierde y atierra.
>
> [so that, when the devil is exiled from faith,
> and fires off decrees condemning it,
> setting traps to enclose.
> And, when the evil one strengthens any doubt,
> even though it is someone anointed with chrism,
> in those parts where schism is raging,
> there they rest, are lost, and are grounded.]

Tallante presents a picture of busy opposition to the Immaculate Conception in 'decretos de condemnación' [decrees condemning the Virgin]. It is probable that he is referring to the accusations of heresy against defenders of the Immaculate Conception, which were a feature of opposition to the doctrine, particularly among Dominicans, in the fourteenth century and later. Lamy mentions Thomas of Strasbourg, Gregory of Rimini, John of Baconthorpe, Guy of Perpignan, and John of Naples, among those condemning the immaculists as heretical (2000: 536–540), although some of them, most notably Baconthorpe, revised their opinion later. None of their writings, however, are decrees. They are commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Tallante interprets the decrees as part of the serpent's attack on the Virgin, even though they are a defence of the traditional sanctificationist position, which had been upheld in the twelfth century by St Bernard and in the thirteenth by Aquinas. The way in which Tallante closes the circle on maculist thinking is typical of the Valencian school of poets and his use of the theme reflects his connections with the *certàmens*.

The Genesis Prophecy in Castilian Poetry

Linking of Genesis 3.15 to the Immaculate Conception is found in Castilian poems from the late fourteenth-century. In Villasandino's 'Generosa muy fermosa' [Generous, very beautiful one] (ID 1147), Mary is the woman 'de quien Lucifer se espanta' [whom Lucifer fears] and Villasandino echoes Genesis 3.15. His use of the text does not go beyond the gentlest of allusions. Mary, victorious over sin, undermines the serpent's power and, as a result, Lucifer trembles. Villasandino transposes the serpent into one of its other manifestations, the fallen angel, Lucifer:

> Generosa, muy fermosa,
> sin manzilla, Virgen santa,
> virtuosa, poderosa,
> de quien Luçifer se espanta […] (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: II, ll.1–4)
>
> [Generous, very beautiful,
> Holy Virgin, virtuous, powerful
> without blemish
> who makes Lucifer tremble]

At the same time, the Virgin is presented as ready to listen to the sinner: 'Enclina / tus orejas de dulçor / oyendo a mi, pecador' (ll.29–31). Villasandino may be echoing the words from the opening antiphon of the hours of the Virgin, which is found at the beginning of the Conception office in some dioceses. He may even have used a devotionary like the one in which the traditional words: 'Intende me domine' [Hear me, o Lord] become 'Intende me, domina' [Hear me, o Lady] (BN 9533, fol. 47^{r}). These two images of the Virgin, opponent of the serpent and mediatrix for sinners, are firmly linked in the medieval mind.

Defence of sinners and conflict with the serpent are combined in a number of poems. For example, Núñez takes the battle between the Woman and the serpent as a central feature in his *Villancico hecho a Nuestra Señora la noche de Navidad* [Carol to Our Lady on Christmas night] (ID 6074 E 6073). Writing either in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, Núñez, a *cancionero* poet about whom little biographical detail is known, marks the defeat of the enemy not as defeat of death but as that of sin.[10] Because of his prior reference to the Virgin's immaculate nature, he intends Genesis references to be read as the enemy's defeat by the Virgin, which he sees as an element of her active role in defending sinners. It is likely also that Santillana's combination of various prefigurations of Mary from the Old Testament should be read as immaculist. In his *gozos* [Joys] poem 'Gózate, gozosa madre' [Rejoice, joyous mother] (ID 0322), Santillana combines the laudatory epithet 'espanto / e cometa del infierno' [terror and comet of hell] (2003: 578, ll.81–82) with references to Mary's creation to combining verses from Ecclesiasticus and from Proverbs (to be examined in Chapter 8). The 'Gozos' or Joys of the Virgin were originally five in number, each dedicated to a different event in the life of the Virgin (Woolf 1968: 137; see Le Gentil [1949–1952: I, 298–309] on contributors to the Hispanic genre). Gradually the number increased and became variable so that ten or even twenty Joys might be included. Tallante's 'Obra en loor de XX excelencias de Nuestra Señora' [Poem in Praise of Twenty Excellences of Our Lady] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 117–118) is evidence of the expansion of the number of Joys from five or seven. Santillana's 'Los gozos de Nuestra Señora' [the Joys of Our Lady] (2003: 574–579) is one of the best-known Spanish Joys poems and it incorporates twelve. Twelve was the typical number included in the

[10] The best study of Núñez is Alan Deyermond's (1989b).

Franciscan version of the rosary, the *stellarium* (see Stratton 1994: 122–137; Twomey 2007a). The events in the life of Mary vary in Hispanic Joys poems but frequently include the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of Christ, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Assumption. In Santillana's version, the combined image occurs in the context of the eleventh joy, Mary's *Transitus*, and it is not conclusive whether he intends to base Mary's incorruptibility on her Conception or on the incorruptibility of her flesh after death.

Mary's role is to shelter sinners and, in doing so she provides a strong counterweight to the power of the serpent. She is the one 'por quien fue quitado / el poder del enemigo' [through whom / by whom the power of the enemy was taken away]. The first interpretation of 'por' acknowledges her as a channel through whom the serpent was defeated and the second celebrates her protagonism as it is defeated. Contrast between Mary and the serpent in terms of their role in salvation allows Núñez to show how Mary's action cancels out the sin of Adam and Eve. Mary's opposition to Lucifer is undertaken on behalf of humanity and Núñez understands that it is her holy nature which defeats the adversary's 'grave deslealtad' [serious disloyalty]. Núñez does not so much concentrate on the crushing of the serpent as on its loss of authority over humankind in his *villancico*:

> Uos soys por quien fue quitado
> el poder del enemigo;
> vos soys la que soys abrigo
> del questa desabrigado;
> Por vos se quito el pecado
> de los dos
> primeros que hizo Dios. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 156, ll.49–55)
>
> [You are the one through whom
> the power of the enemy was taken away;
> you are the one who is shelter
> for those without shelter;
> through you, the sin of the first two
> whom God created
> was taken away.]

Núñez does not however use his Genesis reference in the context of the Conception of the Virgin. It is possible that he intends to base his argument on immaculacy and this is why he sets up the parallels between Mary's actions and those of the serpent but in the absence of other clear indicators, it is difficult to decide either way.

An even greater bond between the two is established in Gómez Manrique's poem. He depicts Mary and the devil as belonging to a binary divide between good and evil. Each opposing force is connected to the other and cannot operate without its existence: 'que toda contrariedad se cura por su contrario' [for every opposing force is cured by its opposite]:

> O tú, bendita muger,
> por la qual serán pobladas
> aquellas sacras moradas
> que despobló Luçifer,
> curando tu santidad
> la graue deslealtad
> deste cruel aduersario
> con paçiençia y humilldad:
> que toda contrariedad
> se cura por su contrario. (2003: 289, ll.34–43)[11]
>
> [O you blessed woman,
> through whom the sacred dwellings,
> which Lucifer depopulated,
> will be repopulated,
> with your holiness curing
> the serious disloyalty
> of this cruel adversary
> with patience and humility:
> for every opposing force
> is cured by its opposite.]

Manrique extends the contrast between the two with his allusion to Genesis 3.16. He indicates that Mary is responsible for populating the earth with followers of Christ. 'Pobladas', the Virgin's action, is contrasted with Lucifer's: 'que despobló Lucifer'. He also intends the prophecy on population of the earth by Eve, mother of the living (Gen. 3.20), to contrast with repopulation of heaven through Mary. According to Manrique, Mary's action is to enable people to enter the 'sacras moradas' [sacred dwellings]. This provides a reversal of Eve's action, which resulted in Eden being depopulated in Genesis 3.16. Mary's holiness is the remedy for the Fall, and will result in the opening of heaven's doors for humanity.

[11] Francisco Vidal González notes that 'tirando' from MP3 is preferable to the reading 'curando' from MN24 (Manrique 2003: 289, n.20). The final two lines (ll.41–43) sum up the sense of the stanza.

Battle between Mary and the forces of evil can on occasion take account of the prophecy in Revelation 12.1, in which the Woman defeats the dragon. The Woman, robed with the sun standing on the moon, and crowned with stars becomes the principal way in which Mary Immaculate is depicted in the late sixteenth century. Pérez de Guzmán's 'Himno a la virtud de Nuestra Señora' [Hymn to the Virtue of Our Lady] (ID 0104 S0072) does not refer to the sun, moon, or stars but it does set the Woman-Mary in opposition to the dragon. Pérez de Guzmán, combines mentioning the protagonists of the Revelation battle with a series of interwoven epithets in praise of Mary, including a Song of Songs reference to her beauty (see Chapter 7): 'Señora, pulcra e decora' [Lady, beautiful and decorous]:

> v*ir*gen sa*n*ta
> de q*ui*en ca*n*ta
> salamon
> de cuyo viso se espanta
> el dragon […] (in Foulché-Delbosc 1912–1915: I, 304, ll. 1, 5, 21–24; Severin 1990: 43)
>
> [Holy Virgin, of whom Solomon
> sings,
> whose aspect terrifies
> the dragon.]

Whilst Pérez de Guzmán's verse foregrounds two of the principal Conception referents, the Song of Songs and Genesis 3.15, there is no openly immaculist statement in the poem. The poem is dedicated to the virtue of the Virgin. The opening lines of the stanza shift between a hymn to the Virgin's beauty and a eulogy of her for being terrifying. She is the recipient of Solomon's song because of her beauty but that same radiant beauty and perfect purity are enough to terrify the dragon. Pérez de Guzmán's allusion to Revelation 12.1 and to the Song of Songs 4.7 may be enough to constitute contribution to support for the Immaculate Conception. He also cites Song of Songs 4.7 in l.5 and associates the Virgin with the temple, another immaculist signifier (Twomey 2003a). I explore how poets use one verse of the Song of Songs as two different Old Testament prefigurations of the Immaculate Conception in the next two chapters.

The Binding of Satan

Defeat and conflict are, however, only one way of using the Protoevangelium. The imagery surrounding binding and unbinding, used by some of the fifteenth-century poets in both Castile and Aragon, also has its roots in Genesis 3.15. Harmonization of several references to Genesis, including one to the Virgin's power to loose captives occurs in the eighteenth stanza of Núñez's *villancico*:

> Vos soys la que nos desata
> del poder de lucifer,
> y la que puede hazer
> el lodo mas que la plata. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 157–158, ll.129–132)

> [You are the one who releases (unties) us
> from the power of Satan
> and the one who can make
> clay better than silver.]

Defeating Lucifer cannot be separated from release of humanity from bondage and from the spiritual improvement it brings. Núñez's reference to clay and to silver alludes to the origins of humanity in Adam, *adamah*, meaning created from the earth (*NJB* 10, 2.d). However, the work that the potter shapes out of clay is an image of the creative work of God (Jeremiah 18.4–6). At the same time, the purification of gold and silver is an attribute of Yahweh. God will act as a refiner and 'will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they can make the offering to Yahweh' (Malachi 3.3). Both clay and silver, therefore point to the creative handiwork of which God is capable. In the fifteenth century, there were a number of centres of goldsmithing in the fifteenth century, including Toledo. Whilst Núñez's reference is to several Old Testament sources, as I have shown, the concept of producing fine gold jewellery was one to which his audience could easily relate. The prefiguration of the Immaculate Conception by gold is a theme to which I return in the next chapter.

In his image of humanity shackled in the power of Lucifer, Núñez wishes to affirm how the Virgin's sinlessness underpins her powers to assist its liberation. Such a liberation from Lucifer's chains can only be effective when it is achieved by a person free from sin.

Binding in a very different sense underlies the poem submitted to the 1474 *certamen* by Miqualot Pereç, whom the *certamen* rubric styles as 'ciutadà' [a citizen]. Pereç was a skilled translator, translating Thomas

à Kempis's book, *Imitació de Jesucrist*, into Catalan. The first stanza of Pereç's entry sets references to celestial battle firmly in the context of the motherhood of Mary: 'puix Ell volgué de vos pendre la ·mprempta' [since he wanted to take his imprint from you]. Mary's care for sinners is another feature of the poem: 'Dels peccadors confort, qu·a tots conforta' [comfort of sinners, who comforts all]. Pereç links the binding of Satan to a statement about the Virgin's immaculate nature:

> Dels peccadors confort qu'a tots conforta
> ligant Satan en lo més fondo centre.
> Vós sola sou, humil verge Maria,
> vexell perfet, del primer crim exempta.
> Déu eternal preservada us tenia,
> en res en vós de tacha no volia, […]. (295, ll.4–9)
>
> [Comfort of sinners who comforts all
> binding Satan in the deepest centre.
> You alone, humble Virgin Mary,
> perfect vessel, exempt from the first crime,
> God eternal kept you preserved
> and wanted no stain in you.]

The Virgin is comfort of sinners because she is sinless and she is the perfect vessel, 'vexell perfet', because she held Christ in her womb. Pereç equates her to the pyx, which holds the host. For Pereç, she cannot be a eucharistic vessel, unless she is exempt from the first sin, the sin of Adam and Eve. However, the sense of 'vexell' is not just eucharistic, nor is it merely a foretaste of the chalice or the pyx which will hold Christ's body. It is also a biblical allusion, recalling a verse from Proverbs 25.4: 'From silver remove the dross, and it emerges wholly purified' (*NJB*: 1000). In the original Latin, the association is closer: 'Aufer rubiginem de argento et egredietur vas purissimum' [remove the rust from silver and a perfect vase will be created]. The verse was used on many occasions by Pope John XXII to support the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (Lamy 2000: 446). The brief allusion to silver in Núñez's poem and the fuller allusion to precious metals in Pereç's may both echo the same immaculist sermon.

The final lines of Pereç's stanza refer to the will of God, 'volia' and 'us tenia' [kept you], in preserving the Virgin as part of the divine plan. The Virgin's preservation from sin, 'exempta', frequently used in immaculist poetry, allows Pereç to show his hand with regard to his views on the Immaculate Conception. He creates his own immaculist context within the poem.

Even though Pereç has established the Virgin's unique relationship to Christ, it does not prevent him from including all humanity in her victory:

> La humanal natura, desterrada
> per lo peccat de nostre primer pare,
> sobre ·ls ceraffs haveu vós exalçada.
> De parahís mostrant la bella ·trada,
> reyna dels cels, filla de Déu y mare,
> vós dels inferns haveu romput les baldes,
> dels pares sants desligant les cadenes,
> perquè, la creu portant per armes saldes,
> d'on ancillà Jhesús en vostres faldes,
> lo peccador se deffén de les penes. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 296, ll.31–40)

> [Human nature, exiled
> because of the sin of our first father,
> has exalted you above the seraphs.
> Showing the beautiful entrance to Paradise,
> Queen of heaven, daughter of God, and mother,
> you have broken the bounds of hell's regions,
> loosing the bonds of the holy fathers,
> so that, bearing the cross, for redeemed souls,
> from where Jesus sheltered in your skirts,
> the sinner is protected from punishment.]

Pereç refers to the exile of Adam and Eve and their descendants from Eden, which was one element of their punishment after the Fall. The exile of humanity ceases, according to Pereç, with the Virgin's victory: 'haveu romput les baldes' [you have broken the bounds]. 'Romput' has a double set of implications. It is the verb most often used in Valencian for the crushing of the serpent's head. It is also used of Christ's bursting of the bounds of hell.

Echo of Genesis is also to be found in 'dels inferns' [of hell's regions], pointing to the domain of the serpent whose defeat means release of captives: 'dels pares sants desligant les cadenes'. Ferrando Francés, in his brief introduction to this poem, refers to the Virgin's active role in the economy of salvation (1983: 237) and his words signal the way she appropriates the role of Christ in Pereç's poem. It is the Virgin who enters the nether regions to release the captives, not Christ after his Resurrection. Binding and unbinding provide a unified theme in the poem and it is unlikely to be incidental, given the rising importance of the Genesis text in proof of the Immaculate Conception.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have examined references to Genesis 3.15 in liturgy and in poetry showing how the opposition between the serpent and the Woman reaches to the heart of much medieval Marian writing, particularly of the miracles. I have also noted that although references to the conflict are often related to the Immaculate Conception, the site of the conflict can also be the Crucifixion or the Incarnation, meaning that it must be interpreted with care. Marian poets prior to the fourteenth century never use references to the conflict between the Woman and the serpent to underpin the Immaculate Conception. Many allude to purity in connection with the battle against the serpent but, even though they may choose to depict conflict, they do this to illustrate the Virgin's capacity to assist the sinner in achieving salvation. They also illustrate the doctrine of the Incarnation.

By the fifteenth century, many liturgies incorporated the crushing of the serpent among antiphons for the Conception feast. By the end of the century, poets are beginning to recast the crushing of the serpent by the Immaculate Virgin, as the key biblical prefiguration of the defeat of original sin through Christ's redemptive power.

In Castilian poems there are few examples of allusion to Genesis 3.15 and there are few dedicated immaculist poems. Santillana's reference to the confrontation between the serpent and the rose in the context of Mary's Dormition broadens perspectives on how the Genesis prophecy was being used. Santillana uses it to express the nature of her incorruptible flesh and this shows that the prefiguration was fluid in the fifteenth century and that context is the best determinant of the way in which Castilian poets used Scripture.

Most Valencian poets, whether they address the Immaculate Conception in a full poem or in a stanza, use Genesis 3.15 as a point of reference. Some refer directly to the prophecy, translating the words *ipsa conteret caput tuum*. Others pick up themes from it, such as subjugation or binding, and develop them, often reversing their implications. They consider the possibility that, if the Virgin were not totally victorious, or immaculate, then she herself must have been subjugated and held in the power of the serpent. Some poets prefer to rework the New Testament fulfilment of the Protoevangelium. Because it is the combination of Genesis and Apocalyptic references which exercised such a powerful effect on Spanish art of the sixteenth century, influencing Zurbarán and Murillo, and inspiring them to produce sublime pictorial represen-

tations of Mary Immaculate, I have explored whether combination of the two is to be found in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and have found that this is not the case.

The conflict between the serpent and the Virgin is woven into the fabric of immaculist poems, particularly in the kingdom of Aragon. Redemptive grace, accorded to Mary at the time of her conception, enables her to crush the serpent beneath her immaculate heel.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN: MATCHLESS MAIDEN

Et macula non est in te

The Song of Songs, in which the appealing image of the rose without thorn has its origin, is another of the important biblical texts, along with Genesis 3.15, used to support the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Song of Songs has provided theologians and poets with many terms of praise for a person beloved but its protagonist, the Shulamite, a young lover, became associated with Mary and this meant that that a short text originally intended as a love-song became a way of contrasting Mary with the rest of sinful humanity. 'Et macula non est in te' [and there is no blemish in you] (Song of Songs 4.7) is at the root of the word 'immaculate' and is, therefore, central to any study of biblical sources of the Conception doctrine.

In this chapter, I will chart how, through a combination of allegorical and tropological readings, the Song of Songs formed a portrait of the relationship between God and Mary (Matter 1990: 15). I examine how fifteenth-century poets used it, exploring their direct references, synonyms, and allusions to it. Finally, I show how it was used as a means of castigating opponents of the doctrine.

According to modern interpreters, the Song of Songs was likely to have been 'at its earliest stages […] not a unified work at all, but several lyric poems, each having its integrity' (Falk 1982: 3). Some theologians consider that it could have been written as a cycle of wedding songs and others that it could have derived from popular oral tradition. Whichever is the true interpretation, there is little reliable evidence to explain why it was originally included in the corpus of Jewish canonical literature. Roland E. Murphy considers it unlikely that 'the "history" of interpretation of the Song of Songs began with a firm Jewish tradition of allegorizing or spiritual exposition, in which the Song was understood to celebrate the love between God and Israel' (1990: 12). Despite its secular origins, the Song of Songs must have been included in the Jewish canon because it began to be subject to different interpretations.

Christian interpretation of the Song of Songs took the developments still further in the first centuries. Origen was the first to refer to its spiritual connotations. Although most of his work is lost, in two extant homilies on the Song of Songs, he 'develops the declarations of love made by the Song's male and female protagonists into a portrait of the nuptial arrangement between Christ and the Church' (Murphy 1990: 17). His interpretation also relates it to the soul. By the end of the fifth century, spiritual interpretation had become standard (Matter 1990: 20–58). As the religious life began to take hold in Christian society, 'the love songs of Solomon and the Shulamite were predominantly applied to the love of Christ and the consecrated virgin or nun' (Warner 1976: 126). It was only a matter of time until the young girl of the Song became associated with the first representative of the Church, Mary.

The first 'thoroughgoing Marian exegesis' of the Song of Songs was written by Rupert of Deutz (Murphy 1990: 25). However, it was St Bernard who gave greater prominence to a variety of mystical interpretations of the Song of Songs, dedicating eighty-six sermons to it. His interpretations are multiple: 'Christ is the Lover of the Canticle, his bride sometimes the Church, sometimes the individual soul, sometimes the monks of Clairvaux, and sometimes the Virgin' (Murphy 1990: 129).

Tensions inherent in the Song of Songs' origin as a love song seem particularly paradoxical, once it was applied to Mary. It is difficult to see how the sexuality of the relationship between the lover and the beloved could be applied to the Mother of the Lord, a woman whose main attribute was her virginity: 'Comment dont [sic] l'épouse adultère a-t-elle pu devenir une fiancée sans tache?' [How could the adulterous wife have turned into a young betrothed woman who is without blemish] (Laurentin 1993: 2):

> Il s'agit en effet de ce qu'il y a de plus obscur dans le mystère du salut: l'Amour de Dieu pour l'homme pécheur. Ce peuple que Dieu avait choisi comme une épouse bien-aimée selon l'enseignement des prophètes a été infidèle. Il s'est prostitué aux faux dieux. Et pourtant l'amour de Dieu ne désespère pas. Ainsi s'esquisse une mystérieuse promesse: l'épouse adultère Dieu la reprendra dans les derniers temps comme une fiancée pure. Au terme de cette ligne, dans le *cantique des cantiques* tout le passé, tous les reproches sont effacées. L'epoux-Yahweh peut dire à sa fiancée-Israël: 'Tu es toute belle, il n'y a pas de tache en toi' (Cant.4.7). Paradoxe déconcertante. (Laurentin 1968: 113)
>
> [The love of God for sinful man is in fact one of the things most difficult to grasp in the mystery of salvation. The people chosen by God to be his beloved companion had been unfaithful, according to the prophets.

> They turned to false Gods. Yet God's love did not give up on them. So a mysterious promise was set out: God would take the adulterous wife in the last days as a pure bride to be. At the end of this line, in the Song of Songs all the past, all the reproaches are wiped away. Yahweh the husband says to his betrothed Israel: 'You are totally beautiful and there is no blemish in you' (Song of Songs 4.7). A disconcerting paradox.]

Laurentin's application of the Song to the experience of God's chosen people, first Israel, then the Church, is already troubling, as he admits. He then moves rapidly to link the Virgin both to the Church and the Beloved of the Song of Songs, attesting that 'un resurgissement de pureté' [a new blossoming of purity] was necessary for the change from Israel to the Church to occur. This 'blossoming' was occasioned by the Immaculate Conception accorded to the Virgin: 'C'est en elle qui commence la Sainte Eglise et c'est ainsi que dès l'origine Dieu peut lui dire, non selon une figure poétique mais en toute vérité: "Tu es toute belle et il n'y a pas de tache en toi"' [It is in her that the Holy Church takes its beginnings and so it is that, from the start, God can say to her, not in figurative language, but in all truth: 'You are wholly beautiful and there is no blemish in you'] (1968: 114).

Immaculate Virgin

The epithet most often used today to describe Mary's Conception is immaculate and it is important to begin by checking whether the term was found at all and if so, how it was used in the fifteenth century. Solano signals St Ildephonse as the first to apply the term immaculate to the Virgin (1954: 142). In liturgy, *immaculata* was a term known above all through the hours of the Virgin, where it was repeated on a daily basis: 'tunc immaculata ero et emundabur a delicto maximo' [so I will be immaculate and will be cleansed of the greatest crime] (BL Add. 18193, fol. 24^{v}). However, it is not used in offices of the Conception until that of Nogarolis, written at the end of the fifteenth century.[1] Even then,

[1] Manuscript copies of Nogarolis's office are found in Zaragoza, Barcelona, Vich, and Toledo dioceses. There are also copies in the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville and in the Escorial, suggesting that its use was widespread in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. There is also a seventeenth-century handwritten copy in the Biblioteca Nacional (BN 4437). Indigenous offices continued to be printed right to the end of the fifteenth century.

it is used infrequently, for example, as a versicle at vespers: 'Immaculata conceptio est hodie sancte marie uirginis. Alleluia. Alleluia' [Today is the Immaculate Conception of the holy Virgin Mary] (BC 1043, fol. 13^{r}). Evidence suggests that *immaculata* had not been anchored exclusively to the Conception in a liturgical context by the fifteenth century.

Use of the Castilian form 'inmaculada', or the Catalan 'immaculada', is rare. In 'Generosa muy fermosa' (ID 1147), Villasandino uses it in the exclamatory first line of the final stanza: '*O Beata inmaculata*' (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 11, ll.50). '*Inmaculata*' is in apposition to 'sin error'. As one of the older generation of poets in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Villasandino felt overshadowed by his younger rivals. They were influenced by the Italian *culto* style, and he may have used the Latin term because he wanted to show off his learning.

A small number of poets use 'inmaculada' in Catalan poetry for the 1474 *certamen* but it is not always closely tied to the Conception. Pere de Civillar was a silversmith by profession, as the rubric indicates. His poem is written in Castilian and Ferrando Francés therefore speculates that he must have been of Castilian origin since few members of the bourgeoisie were capable of writing poetry in more than one language (202). Civillar begins with a dream sequence, after which he is transported to a beautiful 'vergel' [grove], where he is afforded a vision of the Virgin. Civillar describes the Virgin as being transported in a 'carro trihunfante' [a chariot or float] and his vision recalls the processions which took place in honour of the Virgin in the city. Among the floats described by Antonio Cortés is a float of 'La purísima' [the purest one] and although the float which Cortés describes dates from 1665, the 'Casa de les Roques' [the House of the Floral Floats] was built between 1435 and 1477, showing that the processions had already begun in the mid fifteenth century (1999: 42). However, the processions included another dedicated to the Virgin, that of the 'Virgen de los desamparados' [Virgin of the needy] and because Civillar calls the Virgin both 'madre de consolación' [mother of consolation] and 'inmaculada', he could be referring to either. Civillar's poem does not have any direct statement about the Conception of Mary, although in stanza four, he refers obliquely to 'cantando el misterio' [singing the mystery]. Civillar may intend to refer to the Conception but he could equally be referring to other Marian feasts, perhaps the Assumption. Civillar clearly intends to evoke the Song of Songs because he consolidates 'inmaculada' with the 'ditxos' of Solomon: 'Aquesta es la madre

de consolación / inmaculada, del todo perfeta. / ¡O buenos ditxos del rey Salamón!' [She is the mother of consolation, immaculate, wholly perfect / O excellent verses of King Solomon!] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 299, ll.21–23). Civillar reinforces his allusion to the Song of Songs in the next lines: 'Y est· es la fuente de quien, cierto, mana / sabor e scientia, segund proffetía' [And this is the fountain from whom, in truth, flows knowledge and wisdom, in accordance with his prophesies] (299–300, ll.27–29). Civillar is referring to the sealed fountain of the Song of Songs (4.12), taken from the 'garden song' (Murphy 1990: 158) (see also Chapter 8). He follows the same pattern as the Song of Songs in his poem, where the reference to the fountain follows an echo of the *wasf*, a description of the woman's unblemished beauty.

Jaume Gaçull, a nobleman from Valencia, took an important role for the City Council in overseeing the gates of the city during the time of the plague. He associates the epithet of praise 'inmaculada verge' [immaculate virgin] to Mary's virginal state before and after giving birth: 'Ans e aprés tostemps inmaculada / verge, del part restàs neta com vori' [before and after, always immaculate virgin, you remained as clean as ivory] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 317, ll.5–6). There can be some speculation about what Gaçull intended by his use of 'immaculada'. The context for it in the poem is the Virgin Birth and there are no further clues other than the term 'tostemps' which might suggest he is referring to the Virgin's origins. He may intend 'inmaculada' to show how Mary was prepared for the Incarnation through being granted a special privilege at the moment of her conception, that she was pure and stainless, and did not commit any actual sins. He might also mean that the Virgin remained in the same virginal state before and even after giving birth, and that her body was not damaged by motherhood. Both interpretations are possible.

His poem contains some further elliptical echoes of the Song of Songs to reinforce the meaning of 'immaculada'. 'Vori' [ivory] suggests purity, through its milky-white colour. Choosing it also echoes the ivory colour of the Beloved's neck (Song of Songs 7.4). The remainder of the poem contains a number of further Song of Songs allusions. In the following stanza, he refers to 'la font brollant nostre salut' [the fountain gushing forth our salvation] (317, l.10). This is the 'Fons hortorum: puteus aquarum viuentium, quae fluunt impetu de Libano' [the fountain in the gardens: a spring of living water which flows from Lebanon] (Song of Songs 4.15).

'Inmaculada' is also used to describe the Virgin's body at the moment of the Incarnation by Vivot in the 1486 *certamen*:

> Que l'adveniment i santificada
> incarnació d'Adam lo darrer
> havia de ser dins un· immaculada,
> mar· i verge ·semps, de crim no tocada. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 473, ll.43–46)
>
> [For the coming and sanctified
> Incarnation of the second Adam
> had to be in an immaculate mother,
> a virgin forever, untouched by sin.]

Vivot rephrases 'immaculada', adding 'de crim no tocada' [untouched by sin]. The position of 'de crim no tocada' means it acts as a parallel epithet to comply with the rhyme scheme but also it may be an explanation.

Immediately after this, Vivot discusses mortal and venial sin. He allies the Virgin's immaculate nature to the battle between good and evil, arguing that the devil would have won the day had the Virgin been stained by sin. Vivot links Satan's action to his desire to stall redemption by staining such an important created being: 'E de l'inimich de nostra natura / fóre stat major l'enginy reprovat / bastant macular tan gran creatura' [and the enemy of our nature / would have been even greater / just by causing such a great creature to sin] (474, ll.79–81). The link Vivot makes between sin and 'macular', which might be translated as 'stain' or 'cause to sin', is made clear as the poem develops and its immaculist intentions are revealed.

Fenollar also links 'immaculada' to other immaculist signifiers. He relies on scholastic argument to present the case in favour of the Immaculate Conception:

> La puritat que·l Fill ha retenguda
> prenent la carn de vós, immaculada,
> Mare sens par, purament concebuda,
> vós altament en la sua venguda
> fós Montjuïch que l'aveu senyalada,
> significant a Qui tot pur venia
> que per senyal respondre li devia. (Ferrando Francés 1983: 493–494, ll.85–91)
>
> [The purity that the Son retained
> taking flesh from you, immaculate mother
> matchless, conceived purely,
> you in his coming were truly

Montjuich who pointed to him
signifying the Pure One who was coming
who was to correspond to him as a sign.]

He parallels 'Immaculada' with 'mare sens par' [peerless mother], whilst 'sens par' is recapitulated in 'purament concebuda' [conceived purely]. The use of 'Montjuïch' confirms Mary's Jewish heritage. Montjuïch was often the Jewish burial ground in Spanish cities, such as in Barcelona. It may have other allusions. The encounters between God and humanity take place on mountains, such as Moses's meeting with God on Mount Sinaï. The meeting of divine and human in the Incarnation takes place at the mountain of Mary's body. Fenollar's poem has been described as 'una altra lliçó teològica d'escassa vàlua poètica' [another theological lesson of little poetic value] by Ferrando Francés (1983: 422). Fenollar's '*Tornada*' provides a weak ending to the poem and his use of rhyme bears out Francés's judgement. After the strong rhyme pattern: '-uda' 'retenguda'; '-ada', 'immaculada'; '-uda', 'concebuda'; '-uda', 'venguda'; '-ada', 'senyalada'; the weak endings '-ia', 'venia', and 'devia' fade into insignificance, contributing to the drift at the end of the poem. The rhyme scheme fails to support the points the poet wishes to make about Mary's nature through his use of 'Montjuïch'.

Jaume de Olesa, a Majorcan, related to Arnau de Cors, who submitted a poem to a poetry competition in honour of the twenty triumphs of Mary as well as to the 1474 *certamen*, employs 'Immaculada' as a term of address for the Virgin in the 'Exordi o principi', which introduces his entry and he sets it in the context of the Conception. Olesa describes the Virgin as 'sens tota culpa ·ngendrada' [conceived without any sin] and makes the link between the Conception and 'immaculada'. On the one hand, the link between 'immaculada' and '·ngendrada' is necessary because of the rhyme scheme and because Olesa needs a filler to complete the stanza. On the other, 'immaculada' may need some explanation or may need a direct contextualization to the Conception because alone it did not signal such a link. Explanation of 'inmaculada' is a common feature of *certamen* poems. However, as María Rosa Lida de Malkiel demonstrates in her study of Juan de Mena (1984: 166–167), the use of parallel epithets was particularly favoured in *cancionero* poetry. The explanatory adjuncts probably may be no more than fillers, and may have more to do with poetic style than clarification:

> En la terr· és vuy lohada
> per vós, i ·n los cels pels àngels,
> aquella Immaculada
> sens tota culpa ·ngendrada. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 468, ll.11–14)
>
> [She is highly praised by you
> on earth, and by the angels in the heavens,
> the Immaculate one
> conceived without any sin.]

The final two occasions on which 'immaculata' occur are in a poem entered for the marzipan prize by Narcís Vinyolés (496, ll.52, 73) and both have an immaculist context, although only the first is paralleled in the way Lida de Malkiel describes. Vinyoles's poem represents a series of arguments in favour of the Immaculate Conception. He was an important Valencian, who held official office most notably being elected several times as Town Councillor and as Administrator of the Silk Market (Lonja). Vinyoles wrote three *certamen* poems, two in Catalan and one in Italian. The rubric to his poem for the St Christopher *certamen* is testimony to the high regard in which he was held, terming him 'magnífich' (1983: 616). Following an outline of the mystery of the Incarnation, in which the pure Virgin made the invisible Godhead visible, she is then described as 'urna sacrata' [sacred urn] and 'vaso divinale' [divine chalice]. He refers to the crushing of the serpent by her and directly associates the defeat of the serpent with her flesh, 'tuo corpo ch'è preservatamente' [your body which is preserved]. Only then does he describe her flesh as 'pura immaculata' (l.52). The next stanza of the poem is dedicated to discussion of the 'falso argumento' put forward by opponents of the doctrine, and to poetic defence of the Franciscan position on Mary's preservation from original sin. This defence leads Vinyoles into a stanza of praise of Mary for her relationship with both Father and Son, as part of which she is described as 'immaculata rosa' (l.73).

It is surprising to find that 'immaculada' is used more often in the *certamen* written in praise of Mary rather than in the one dedicated to the Conception. Few of the poets writing for the 1486 Conception *certamen* use the word 'immaculada', and, when they do, associate it with the Conception. In each case the poet constructs an immaculist context through the use of a parallel epithet or by the way it follows on a series of explicit immaculist arguments.

Manzilla and màcula

Even though poets did not often call Mary immaculate, they did allude to Song of Songs 4.7, using its vernacular equivalents 'sin manzilla' or 'sin màcula' [without blemish]. Yakov Malkiel (1947: 272–301) traces its origin and its dialectal variants *maziella, mancilla, manzilla* to the Vulgar Latin *macella.* Malkiel found it used with various meanings: '(a) stain, spot (b) moral blemish, stigma (c) insult, offense (d) wound, gash, open sore'. Commenting upon the metaphoric uses of *macella*, which are most relevant for the purpose of this chapter, Malkiel notes that they were common in the pagan period. He also notes that the term 'acquired special significance with the spread and advent to power of Christianity, in connection with such hitherto unheard of notions as "immaculate conception" and the like' (1947: 291).

'Manzilla' has been recorded as 'moral stain' from very early examples of Castilian writing. Berceo, in his *Milagros*, uses the term 'manciella' in reference to a moral blemish, although not in connection with the Virgin:

> Dísso·l Jesu Christo 'Peidro, el mi amado,
> bien sabes tú qé disso David en su dictado,
> qe éssi folgarié en el monte sagrado
> qe entró sin manciella e quito de pecado. (1980: 75, ll.165a–d)
>
> [Jesus Christ said to him, 'Peter, my beloved,
> well you know what David said in his poem
> that he would rest on the sacred mountain in this way
> for he entered without stain and free from sin.]

In the *LBA*, Juan Ruiz uses a range of epithets to describe the stainless nature of the Virgin, including 'sin manzilla de pecados' [without stain of sins] (1983: 245, l.1663f.), 'sin vileza' [without foulness] (245, l.1664b), and 'santa flor non tañida' [holy, unblemished flower] (246, l.1667b). He combines his use of 'sin manzilla' with other biblical phrases, such as 'de gracia llena cumplida' and 'graçia plena' (245). Riera Estarellas considers that Juan Ruiz's epithets about the Virgin constitute 'afirmaciones casi explícitas' [almost explicit affirmations] of the Conception doctrine (1955: 254) but he is carried away by his desire to find evidence of popular celebration of the Conception in the medieval period, especially since he is writing to celebrate the centenary of its definition as a dogma. Fortunately, Riera Estarellas stops short of affirming that there is explicit evidence of immaculist defence in early medieval Hispanic literature. Juan Ruiz makes no distinction between original sin

and actual sins. The use of the plural 'pecados' [sins] (l.1662 f.) indicates he was referring to actual sins. It is impossible to prove whether authors like Juan Ruiz were referring to the doctrine but, given the paucity of evidence from liturgy before the mid fourteenth century, it is likely they were not.

Examination of epithets used by early medieval poets in praise of Mary shows that Berceo, in his *Milagros*, most frequently uses 'Sennora', 'Gloriosa', and 'Madre'. 'Gloriosa' is used on eighty-three occasions, affirming Berceo's determination to celebrate the Virgin's place in the celestial hierachy. Affirmations of her purity are rare. Where they are found, they point to the nature of the Virgin Birth, rather than the Conception: 'Illesa incorrupta en su entegredat' [undamaged, uncorrupted in her integrity] (1980: 31, l.20d). There are no specifically immaculist epithets in the *Milagros* and 'sin manciella' [without stain] is not applied to the Virgin.

'Sen mazela' [without stain] does not apply solely to the Virgin. Alfonso the Wise in his *Cantigas* sometimes applies it to the Virgin. He uses it to describe the Virgin Birth: 'Qual é a que sen mazela / pariu e ficou donzela?' [Who is the one who without stain / bore a child and remained a maid] (1959–1964: III, 197, ll.10–11) and also to the Incarnation. He also shows it in use in liturgy. In the following stanza, the nuns chant to the 'Virgen sen mazela' [stainless Virgin]. Alfonso does not use it exclusively about the Virgin. In the miracle of the priest for whom a wife is sought, the couple is described as being able to live 'sen coita e sen mazela' [without trouble and sorrow] (II, 89, ll.65–66). It is also used of a mother whose daughter brought her sorrow:

> Ouve bela
> filla donzela
> de que mazela
> ll'avēo un dia. (III, 13, 255.21–24)
>
> [She had a beautiful
> young daughter
> who caused her
> sorrow one day.]

By the fifteenth-century, the epithet 'sin manzilla' can sometimes be found in an immaculist context. However, evidence from Villasandino's poetry shows that, even by the early fifteenth century, 'sin manzilla' never became exclusively reserved for the Immaculate Conception, nor even for the Virgin. Villasandino uses 'manzilla' in a variety of ways:

De Castilla e sin temor
fui rey, mas, por manzilla
el señor de Jarandilla
es d'esto bien sabidor […]. (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 241, ll.10–13)[2]

[Of Castile he was king,
and without fear, but, sadly,
the Lord of Jarandilla
is fully cognizant of this (…)].

Villasandino made his living through his poetry and was dependent on his patrons for gifts, even gifts of clothing. He pleads with Pero López de Ayala for the gift of a good quality cast-off garment, although he is willing to acknowledge that any garment would have more value than nothing. Susan Crane discusses the rituals of gifting and the value to the recipient (2002: 25). Even though any gift from a noble patron would convey messages about Villasandino's status at court, a little used garment would better enhance it. 'Manzilla' [moral blemish] expresses the shame Villasandino would feel, were the garment from his patron well worn:

E bien saben todos que vos non traedes
ropa ninguna que sea senzilla.
Por ende, sería a mí grant manzilla
si de vos oviesse ropa desdoblada,
pero mas vale algo que no nada: […] (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 129, ll.27–31)

[And all know well that you do not wear
any simple clothes.
For this reason, it would be a great moral shame to me
if I received a well-worn garment from you
but still something is better than nothing:]

Villasandino also uses 'sin manzilla' in praise of the nobility and nature of the Castilian prince:

Este es lindo sin toda manzilla,
fijo e nieto de reyes notables,
de reinas loadas e muy onorables,
por partes d'España e aun de Sezilla; (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 15, ll.9–12)

[2] For the background to this feud between Juan de Padilla and the king, see Dutton & Cuenca, n. v3 (1993: 241).

[He is fair without any blemish,
son and grandson of kings,
from honourable and praiseworthy queens,
all through Spain and even Seville;]

The existence of non-immaculist, and even non-Marian, usage of the term 'sin manzilla' urges a cautious approach to the poetry of the fifteenth century, where context is all-important.

Rubrics provide evidence that in some poems contemporary readings were immaculist.[3] The rubric in the *CG* heading Tallante's poem: 'Otra suya sobre el pecado original' [Another Poem on Original Sin] (ID 1002) provides an immaculist macrocontext for the epithet 'libre de manzilla y exemida de pecado' [free from stain and exempt from sin] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 129, ll.82–83). In the ninth stanza he describes the Virgin's Immaculate Conception:

Fuste virgen concebida
con aquel cargo y descargo
que traen la muerte y vida
con la entrada y la sallida
de lo dulce y de lo amargo
Por natura subjugada
a culpa agena,
y por gracia libertada
de tal pena. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 129, ll.73–81)

[You were conceived a virgin
with that charge and discharge,
which bring death and life
with the coming in and going out
of sweetness and bitterness.
By nature subjugated
under another's sin,
and by grace freed
from that punishment.]

Tallante's description includes five axes, each balanced with their opposite: 'cargo […] descargo' [charge / discharge]; 'muerte […] vida' [death / life]; 'entrada […] sallida' [entry / exit]; 'subjugada […] libertada' [subjugated / freed]. The parallels show how the Virgin is part of humanity and yet apart from it. They counterbalance aspects of human existence: life and death, and of salvation: subjugation to sin and free-

[3] For study of how rubrics are used in *cancionero* compilations, see Claudine Potvin (1979) and Nancy Marino (1998).

dom from it, entry to Paradise and exclusion from it, death and life. He then uses 'libre de manzilla' [free from stain] to balance 'exemida de pecado' [exempt from sin] in the stanza immediately following:

> A tan libre de manzilla
> y exemida de pecado
> quen ti solica senzilla
> alli junta la quadrilla
> de todo lo preservado (129, ll.82–86)
>
> [To you alone, simple
> and blemish free
> and exempt from sin
> there joins the group
> of all those preserved.]

'Libre de manzilla' is used by Tallante as an equivalent of 'sin manzilla', and the Song of Songs allusion is reinforced by 'exempta de pecado'. 'Solica senzilla' (l.84) emphasize the singularity of the Virgin, her receptivity in the face of what God granted (l.87), and her simplicity, as she takes on her role in the plan of salvation (ll.85–86). The Virgin's uniqueness brings her closer to the Trinity, making it a Quaternity.

'Manzilla' in its meaning of moral blemish is regularly strengthened by adding 'de pecado'. It is often the case that 'sin manzilla' is accompanied by a second epithet, which appears to explain it. Fray Lope in the *CB* applies it to the Virgin: 'El padre dixo que fuera / sin manzilla de pecado' [The father said she was / without blemish of sin] (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 570, ll.73–74). In the same poem, quoting from devout St Ildephonse, the Virgin is described as 'santa sin manzilla' [holy without blemish] (570, l.97). In a later poem in the same series, 'sin manzilla de pecado' is repeated by fray Lope in a rather more complex context:

> Contades a desmesura
> mi escriptura,
> la que ove yo notado
> a loor de la figura
> e fechura
> Madre de Dios encarnado,
> la qual non fue criatura
> atán pura
> sin manzilla de pecado,
> como ella es altura
> por pintura
> de gran don previllejado. (580, ll.37–48)

[You regard my writing
as excessive,
where I noted
in praise of the person
and deeds
of the Mother of the Incarnate God,
that there was not a creature
so pure
without stain of sin,
for she is noble
through the instilling
of a great gift of privilege.]

The first part of the stanza refers back to the previous poem, by Diego Martínez de Medina (577–578) and, more particularly, to stanzas three and four in which Diego rejected a story recounted about the stain which marked St Bernard's breast after death. Later in the same poem, fray Lope summarizes the maculist viewpoint, claiming that the Dominicans called the Virgin a sinner because of their opposition to the Immaculate Conception: 'Pecadora la llamades / mal errades' [You call her a sinner / you are badly mistaken] (583, ll.193–194). The final lines of the stanza are unclear. It is likely that the poet is referring to the infusion of grace into the Virgin Mary at the moment of her conception. There can be no doubt about the sense of 'sin manzilla' in fray Lope's poems, since it appears in a series dedicated to defence of the Immaculate Conception.

The Catalan equivalent of 'manzilla' is 'màcula' [blemish] and Vivot in his 1486 *certamen* entry uses it to argue that it is unacceptable to hold that the Virgin might be subject to venial sin, the lesser evil, and, therefore, that it is far less acceptable to condemn her to a graver sin, one which closes the door to heaven. The conditional perfect verb forms links the style of argument with scholastic methodology (see above, Chapter 4).

E si lo Fill may permés, mare pia,
qu ·ab vós estigués peccat venial,
qui de paradís no ·ns tanca la via,
tengud· aureu menys, o verge Maria,
la màcula tal,
qui ·ns tanca los cels ab culpa mortal. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 473–474, ll.61–66)

[And if the Son never allowed, pious mother,
that venial sin should take hold in you,
which does not close the way to paradise to us,

how much less, o Virgin Mary, was there present
such a blemish,
which with mortal sin closes heaven's gate to us.]

'La màcula tal' is placed in the stressed position within the stanza in the *pie quebrado* or short line. Rhyme emphasizes association of the three types of sin: 'peccat venial', 'màcula tal', and 'culpa mortal'. Peter Lombard had argued that Mary may have been purged of actual sin and even of concupiscence:

> Mariam quoque totum Spiritus sanctus, in eam praeveniens, a peccato prorsus purgavit, et a fomite peccati etiam liberavit, vel fomitem ipsum penitus evacuando […], vel sic debilitando et extenuando, ut ei postmodum peccandi occasio nullatenus extiterit. (*Sententiarum*, III, d.3, c.1, PL 192, cols 760–761)

> [He then purged Mary from sin, as the Spirit overshadowed her, and freed her from concupiscence, either clearing out that concupiscence or weakening it and lightening it so that there was no occasion for sinning afterwards in her.]

Vivot moves from this accepted premise to argue that original sin should be part of the exemption. His argument, based on the three types of sin, is found in other poems submitted to the *certamen*. Like Vivot, Fenollar addresses whether Mary could have been subject to venial and mortal sin, and to do so, he compares her with other saints:

> Car sent Johan pogué solament caure
> venialment com la Scriptur· aferma,
> los ignocents, l'original contraure,
> y del mortal, los apòstols retraure
> Jhesús volgué quant los donà la ferma.
> Si donchs aquests remé de tal manera,
> qu·entre ·ls elets gran privilegi tenen,
> per què porteu sobre tots cimera
> ans de crear, a vós remé primera,
> y preservar de quants peccats nos vénen.
> Y axí remut si no us hagués, senyora,
> Redemptor cert universal no fóra. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 493, ll.61–72)

> [For St John could only sin venially,
> as Scripture affirms,
> Jesus chose to take original sin from the Innocents
> and retract mortal sin from the Apostles
> when he gave them strength.
> If he redeemed these others in this way,

who among the elect have a great privilege,
so that you carried above all the badge[4]
before creating you he redeemed you first,
and preserved you from all the sins we can have.
And if he had not redeemed you thus, lady,
he would truly not have been a universal Redeemer.]

Fenollar develops a detailed comparison between John the Baptist, the Holy Innocents, the Apostles, and Mary. In the case of the three groups of saints there was already agreement that they were cleansed of sin. John the Baptist, as well as the Apostles, were free from mortal sin. The Holy Innocents were free from original sin. Fenollar's argument is that Mary, greater than all of these should be accorded the same privileges. Fenollar then argues that Christ could not have been the perfect redeemer if he did not redeem the Virgin first.

The Gospel events surrounding the Visitation also cause Fenollar to argue that St Anne must have been happier than Elizabeth, John the Baptist's mother, and that this could not be the case if Mary were stained with original sin:

Elisabeth romàs tostemps alegra,
y de vós més sent· Ana que·n lo centre
digna us tengué, perquè res trist may entre
en pura neu de màcula tan negra. (492: 43–46)

[Elizabeth was happy all through
and St Anne even more so with you, who, in her centre,
worthy held you, so that nothing sorrowful of such a black stain
can ever touch pure snow.]

Vivot approaches 'màcula' in a different way later in his *certamen* entry, when he emphasizes the loving relationship between son and mother. He creates a syllogism. Either God did not comprehend the nature of original sin, or the Virgin was outside God's love, or there was no stain in her:

[…] Si ensemps compresa
ab los altres fos en culpa semblant,
o no ·uria Déu tal màcula ·ntesa,
o l'amor d'Aquell en vós no fon mesa,
de vós poch curant,
lo que no ·s déu dir, mare triumphant. (474, ll.73–78)

[4] The *cimera* was a crest, 'surmounting the helmet of a knight, a symbolically-coloured item of clothing or jewellery, or a device embroidered on tunic or surcoat

[If at any time you were constrained
with all the rest in similar sin,
either God did not comprehend such a blemish,
or his love did not rest on you,
and he cared little for you,
which should never be said, triumphant mother.]

The idea that God's love was incompatible with original sin is to be found in the writing of Pedro Pascual, a Valencian theologian. The parallels between Pascual's argument in his *Disputa del Bisbe de Jaen contra los jueus sobre la fé catholica* [Dispute of the Bishop of Jaen against the Jews] and Vivot's poem are clear:

> Donchs si la Verge Maria es conçebuda en pecat original, aurem a dir que algun temps fon en la ira de Deu, ço que nos deu dir pas, ne creure; mas que ans de la sua concepció e apres es stada en la gracia de Deu e en la sua amors (Tit.48.4). (1907: II, 224)
>
> [So if the Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin, we would have to say that for some time she was in the wrath of God, which we should not say nor believe; rather that before her conception and after she was in God's grace and in his love.]

The very idea of such a stain ever tainting the Virgin is roundly rejected in the final line of the stanza of Vivot's poem as being unbecoming for the Mother of Christ. As well as the reference to the birth of Christ, which had to take place in an immaculate Virgin Mother, expressed using 'immaculada', references to 'màcula' or 'macular' recur on three occasions in the poem.

The argument from fittingness was central to the development of scholastic arguments in defence of the Immaculate Conception (Lamy 2000: 536). It influenced Vivot's argument and also runs through Fuster's winning entry to the 1486 *certamen*. He uses a scholastic rhetorical question to argue how untenable it would be to think of the Virgin with a stained nature (see above, Chapter 4): '¿qui porà dir de vós, excelsa dea, / creada ·n tot ab tota gentilea, / que ·n algun temps de colpa us maculassen?' [Who could say of you / most high Goddess, / created in everything with nobility, that at any time you were stained with sin] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 439, l.1.27–29). Fuster spells out exactly what is to be understood by the verb 'maculassen' because he adds the object of the verb 'culpa' [sin].

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or displayed on the caparisons of a horse' (Macpherson 1998: 2). Macpherson discusses how it is used in the *CG* and how it emphasizes the unison of visual and verbal stimuli.

Francí de Castellví, Baron of Benimuslem and Lord of Mulata, brother of another Valencian poet, Luis de Castellví, submitted two poems to the 1474 *certamen*, one in Castilian and one in Catalan. His connection to the Aragonese Court, which was bilingual at the time, was an influence on his choice of language. Castellví creates thematic unity in his Castilian entry, 'Del gran Redemptor, madre hi esposa' [Mother and Wife of the great Redeemer] by drawing on Song of Songs allusions both to *macula* and to *amica mea*: 'Amiga de Dios en el siglo creada, / y antes que nasciesses por Dios escogida / nasciendo en el ventre, nuncha manzillada' [Beloved of God created from eternity and chosen by God before you were born, born in the womb, ever stain free] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 260, ll.11–13). Castellví marks the purity of the Virgin as a pre-birth event: 'antes que nasciesses', although he does not specify the moment of sanctification. The theme of sanctification is continued in the following line in 'nasciendo en el ventre', in which the idea of rebirth, explicit baptismal imagery, represents cleansing from sin and the pre-redemption of Mary. His use of 'nuncha' ensures that there can be no possibility of reading his verses as maculist. The matchless Virgin could never have been in the power of the serpent. Reference to 'manzillada' is cemented with a myriad of exotic epithets inspired by biblical poems: 'Palma, ciprés, flor, […] / cedro, nardo, mirra' [palm, cypress, flower / cedar, nard, myrrh] (ll.21, 23), which echo the profusion of scents and spices in the Song of Songs (1.12–14; 2.13; 3.6; 4.10–11, 13–14, 16; 5.1, 5; 6.2; 7.13–14; 8.14). The Virgin, because she is sinless, 'smells ambrosial' (Warner 1976: 99).

Use of Synonyms for manzilla or màcula

In Castilian poetry 'tacha' [stain] and its verbal equivalent, 'tañir', are on rare occasions used to replace 'manzilla'. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán's 'Cient trinadas a loor de la Virgen Maria' [Hundred Triplets in Praise of the Virgin] (ID 0103 S 0072) combines 'concebida' with 'tañida', clearly intending it to evoke 'maculada'. It was a poem important in its day, as its presence in many *cancionero* collections shows:

> Concebida
> no tañida
> de culpa, mas eximida
> del malvado

e grant pecado
quel mundo a contaminado. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, ll.19–24)

[Conceived
unstained
by sin, rather exempted
from the evil
and great sin
which has contaminated the world.]

'Concebida' and 'no tañida' are linked by the rhyme scheme, which indicates that Pérez de Guzmán is connecting the Virgin's Conception to proof about it. He also employs the negative form 'no tañida' which echoes *et macula non est in te*. To confirm that he is associating it with the Song of Songs verse, he adds 'de pecado'.

Certamen poets also use many synonyms to replace 'màcula', the most frequent being 'taca' [stain]. De Olesa uses 'taca' to represent original sin, when he affirms that the sin of the old Adam was not present in the Virgin:

Vós no sentís la sentència dada
d'Eva pel crim, Verge de culpa sana,
y axí molt més la taca perpetrada
del vell Adam en vós nunqu· és estada. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 471, ll.78–81).

[You were never touched by the sentence meted out to Eve
for her crime, Virgin, undamaged by sin,
and so much more the sin perpetrated by the old Adam
in you was never present.]

Praise of Mary's stainlessness is usually accompanied by explicit reference to original sin. Olesa first contrasts the results of the Fall in Eve with Mary: 'vós no sentís la sentència dada d'Eva / pel crim' [you never felt the sentence meted out to Eve for her crime] (ll.78–79) and then he contrasts it with the absence of the stain or sin committed by Adam in the Virgin. Olesa echoes the Song of Songs with 'la taca […] en vós nunqu· és estada' [sin was never in you]. Jordi Centelles, in his poem submitted to the 1474 *certamen*, uses 'taca' [stain] in the first stanza: 'taca no us fés peccat original' [original sin made no stain on you] (1983: 251, l.9). Guillem Mercader does the same in his entry to the 1486 *certamen*: 'Donchs ¿qui dirà siau en res tacada / del crim primer?' [So, who will say you were in any way stained by the first crime] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 508, ll.6–7). Mercader was probably from the noble Valencian

family of that name, one of whose members, Lluís, was an important churchman, eventually becoming Bishop of Tortosa in 1514. Mercader was successful in winning the sailing map prize at the *certamen* with his poem.

Staining, combined with another immaculist theme, is found in the poem by Miqualot Pereç, submitted to the 1474 *certamen*. Pereç begins by describing the immaculate nature of the Virgin, using the epithet 'del primer crim exempta' [exempt from the first crime]:

> Vós sola sou, humil Verge Maria,
> vexell perfet, del primer crim exempta.
> Déu eternal, preservada us tenia,
> en res en vós de tacha no volia,
> puix Ell volgué de vos pendre la ·mprempta. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 295, ll.6–10)
>
> [You alone, humble Virgin Mary,
> are perfect vessel, exempt from the first crime.
> Eternal God kept you preserved
> he wanted no stain in you,
> since he wished to take his image from you.]

He develops the concept of the Virgin as Mother, implied in 'vessel', adding the notion of her preparation for that role.[5] Having established the purpose of the immaculate nature of the Virgin, Pereç then introduces the theme of the will of God, which defined why Mary was chosen: 'de res en vós de tacha no volia' [he wanted no stain in you]. It is important to remember that the action of divine will is one of the elements of the three-part argument developed by Scotus's disciples to point to the reasons for the Immaculate Conception. Finally, Pereç ends the stanza by linking the Song of Songs image with a conceptualization of purity: 'volgué de vos pendre la ·mprempta' [he wanted to take the imprint from you]. I will examine the concept of the imprint, at once connected with the Incarnation and the Immaculate Conception in Chapter 8.

Many poets entering the 1474 *certamen* use epithets based on 'neta' [clean]. Francí de Vilalba uses 'neta del vil peccat original' [clean of foul original sin] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 314, l.10); Lorenç Diamant calls the Virgin 'neta sens crim' [clean and without crime] (302, l.30);

[5] The Virgin is described as 'sacred vessel' in 'Lirs virginals', a probable *certamen* entry, dated 1329 (1983: 75, l.9). I discuss the perfect metal of the sacred vessel in the last section of this chapter.

Pere Alcanyiç uses the phrase 'del crim primer fós neta' [of the first crime you were innocent] (331, l.18); Luís Munyoç calls the Virgin 'neta sens taca' [clean without stain] (282, l.24); Roig uses 'la tota neta […] la tota bella' [wholly clean, wholly beautiful] (1978: 159). All have their roots in the *macula* of the Song of Songs.

Immaculate: Conceptualized in Valencian Poetry

Some poets are content to repeat the concept of purity or spotlessness but others decide to illustrate it through a wide range of images. Vallmanya was probably a Barcelona poet who moved down to Valencia after the civil war of 1462–1472. Writing for the 1486 *certamen*, Vallmanya creates a colourful and sustained image. Having referred to the Virgin as 'nau preciosa tallada ·n bon signe' [precious ship crafted in a good ensign] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 452, l.49), he then decribes the effect of original sin as though it were woodworm: 'hon lo mortal verme del crim tan maligne / corcar pogué nunca' [where the mortal worm of evil crime / could never cause rot] (452, ll.52–53). Of course, the description of sin as 'worm' links neatly to the Genesis story, and the serpent, which caused the Fall, and provides a cause for the blemish which affects humanity. Vallmanya may have taken the idea from a treatise by Peter Thomas, well known in the kingdom. Thomas describes the Virgin as an ark, tarred with bitumen to preserve her:

> Arca Noë fuit de lignis levigatis fabricata, intrinsecus et extrinsecus bituminata, a Deo deforis clausa et firmata […] Arca praedicta figurat pulcherrime quod Virgo de qua constat, quod ad salvationem humani generis ordinatur, ex corpore et anima nullam peccati asperitatem habentibus componitur, a Deo intrinscus et extrinsecus bitumine gratiae delinitur […]. (*Liber de innocentia Virginis Mariae*, Lib.II, p.III, c.1, 1665: 241)
>
> [Noah's ark was built in polished wood, coated inside and out with tar, made secure on the outside and reinforced by God. This ark magnificently prefigures the fact that the Virgin, ordained for the salvation of the world, was composed by God with a body and soul stripped of any rough texture of sin and coated with the tar of grace.]

Vallmanya is not the only poet to use an extended conceit to represent lack of corruption. Mercader develops a number of nautical images and they correspond to the prize of the nautical map he sought to win. To build thematic unity, the vessel, which contains the bread, becomes

a ship. The third stanza begins by describing the Virgin's womb as a ship at the moment of the Incarnation: 'Vós sou la nau portant lo pa de vida' [you are the ship bearing the bread of life] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 509, l.25). The metaphor operates at various levels. The infant body of Christ is consecrated already from the first instant of its being and, in consequence, the body of the Virgin becomes a place of storage and portage, like an aumbry, a holy place which is worthy of veneration because of the host reserved there after consecration. The Virgin's body-aumbry is also a New Testament equivalent of the Ark of the Covenant, the holy place where God's covenant with his people was stored as recounted in Deuteronomy. The Ark of the Covenant recalls the other ark, that of Noah, when covenant was made between God and the people of Israel. Mercader combines the nature of the prize, a sailing map, with the association between the three arks to inspire his metaphor. The stanza ends on a nautical image that underlines the relationship of the Virgin to original sin: 'Lo Redemptor portàs dins vostra barca / on falsa may tingués bala ni marca' [The Redeemer you bore in your ship, where false shot nor mark never fell] (ll.35–36). The battle scars, implied in 'bala' and 'marca', borne by the ship that has been attacked, are, therefore, used as a figurative representation of the *macula* of the Song of Songs.

Describing the mix of human and divine in the womb of Mary, in his entry for the 1486 *certamen*, Tallante evokes decay as part of his desire to reject corruption for her body:

> Ca donde ·l Eterno depuso la mano,
> formando la mescla d·umano y divino,
> contempla que donde tomólo tan digno
> que fue de materia do no ·ntró gusano. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 482–483, ll.57–60)
>
> [For where the Eternal One set forth his hand,
> forming the mix of human and divine
> he contemplates where he would take flesh so worthy
> that it was of a matter that worm had never penetrated.]

In general, Valencian poets experiment in their descriptions of sinlessness. Roig's three-fold elaboration of the nature of original sin casts light on the clever way he uses metaphor: 'Del cens e ronya / e vectigal tan general / sola n'és franca' [from the general tax, scabies, and payment / she alone is free] (1978: 155). 'Cens' is taken from the Latin *census* and was used from the twelfth century onwards: 'En el sentit de contracte i dret que es paga' [in the sense of a contract or dues that

are paid] (Coromines 1990–1991: II, 665). 'Vectigal' also is a type of tax payment. Coromines comments on the 'Qüestion que causà en el s. XV entre les nostres ciutats i el rei la imposició de vectigals regis' [dispute caused in the fifteenth century between the king and the towns by the imposition of the royal tax] (1990–1991: XI, 79). The use of 'vectigal', not apparently used elsewhere in this context, thus very succinctly sums up the conflict, as well as the debt implicit in the concept of original sin. 'Ronya' is placed between the two fiscal payments. According to Coromines, it is 'un concepte vague i comprensiu de diverses impureses materials i morals' [a vague and comprehensive concept covering a range of physical and moral impurities] (1990–1991: VII, 453).

Roig, with his medical knowledge, may have wished to refer more specifically than Coromines believed to the original meaning of 'ronya' as 'sarna' [scabies]. He sets physical impurity, scabies, which is one way of representing original sin, between two types of fiscal debt, 'cens' and 'vectigal'. This compact image, thus, expresses not only the debt to be paid inherent in original sin, and which is at the root of the word 'redemption', but also the physical otherness, ugliness, and conflict implied by original sin. The concept of illness to represent original sin is not confined to Roig's poem. Montesino too refers to original sin as 'el mal pestilente' [the pestilent evil] in his 'Reina del cielo' [Queen of Heaven] (1987: 131, 133). Helen Boreland, in her comparison of Montesino with Berceo, examines his representation of the Immaculate Virgin as conqueror of the plague (1981: 312).

Reference to unsullied precious metals is frequently found in Marian poetry in Valencia. Both Jaume Roig and Juan Tallante are aware that several biblical texts about precious metals had been associated with the Immaculate Conception. The metaphor of pure gold was first used by the early apologists for the Conception, particularly Pseudo-Peter Comestor and Pseudo-Peter the Cantor (Lamy 2000: 131). They both considered that the pure flesh, necessary for the Incarnation, was the vein or thread of pure gold, which stretched from the time of Adam and Eve to the time of the Virgin's conception. Roig, in 'ver or sens lliga' [true gold without trace metals] (1978: 159), compares the Virgin, uncorrupted, to Eve (see below, Chapter 9). Its presence in Catalan poetry suggests that Juan de Segovia's office was known in Valencia, though no trace of it has been found, because the image of gold shining in the mud is a response at third night prayer: 'Auctor mortis diabolus ab exordio genus viciauit humanum: sed aurum fulgens reperitur in luto' [the author of death, the devil from the beginning damaged

the human race. But shining gold is visible in the mud] (*Breviarium gerundense*, ACG 125, fol. 6v).

Tallante's final stanza in 'Otra obra suya sobre la libertad de Nuestra Señora del pecado original' [Another poem on the freedom from original sin of Our Lady] (ID 6046) has as its purpose a final jibe at the opponents of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception:

> Mirad que triunfo de la coronada
> que quanto mas creen tacar su metal,
> muy mas resplandece su mas essencial,
> por ser sobre liga de plata cendrada. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 118, ll.85–88)
>
> [See what triumph of one who is crowned
> for however they seek to dull her metal,
> all the more brightly it shines,
> since it is set on pure silver.]

Opponents are seeking to discredit the Virgin and her origins: 'quanto mas creen tacar el metal' [however much they seek to dull her metal]. The image fits well with Tallante's interpretation of maculist preaching and writing of the period and echoes some of the insults regularly hurled at opponents of the doctrine. He also highlights their failure to dishonour her, since 'tacar su metal' [dull her metal] is balanced by 'muy mas resplandece su mas essencial' [all the more brightly shines her essence].

Miquel Miralles, about whom little is known beyond his two contributions to the 1486 *certamen*, and one to that in honour of St Christopher, was probably familiar with the work of the other poets. The *Espill* was finished in 1460, and Tallante also was a popular and gifted poet who submitted an entry to the 1486 *certamen*. Miralles takes the image of gold as the purest of metals comparing it with the ground where it is found:

> Lo sol molt clar, per excel·lent noblea
> creà ·ls metayls y és d'argentviu la pasta
> y en aspres lochs l'or més perfet conrea,
> lo qual, com hix, trau tanta gentilea
> que l'aspretat no l'altera ni ·l guasta. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 454, ll.13–17)
>
> [The clear sun, by excellent nobility
> creates metals and mercury transforms them
> and in inhospitable places it prepares the purest gold,
> and, as it is made, it bears such nobility
> that the rough surroundings cannot rust or spoil it.]

The image follows an extremely ornate introductory stanza about Phoebus, badly undermined by the addition of a reference to creation at the very end of the stanza (see below, Chapter 8). Miralles extends the sun image to represent both the Creator and the source of gold. Gold is a symbol of purity since it cannot rust or spoil: 'l'aspretat no l'altera ni ·l guasta' [the rough surroundings cannot rust or spoil it] (l.17). Mercury was thought to be the first element used to transform base metals into gold in alchemy.

Silver was also associated with the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages. In her study of Proverbs 25.4, where silver and rust are contrasted, Lamy indicates that rust was a metaphor for original sin in the Middle Ages (2000: 447, n.245). Miralles is alluding to it: 'From silver remove the dross and it emerges wholly purified' (*NJB*: 1000) and probably echoing a sermon attributed to John XXII, in which the Proverbs verse and original sin are enmeshed:

> Hic petierat Sapiens Prover. 25.4: 'Aufer rubiginem de argento et egredietur vas purissimum'. Aufer rubiginem, id est peccatum originale, quod tanquam rubigo maculat animam, de argento, hoc est de anima beatae Mariae, quae propter suam nobilitatem argentums dicitur, et egredietur vas purissimum, quia antequam egrederetur vel nascetur, fuit mundata et purgata a peccato originali. (*Tenuisti manum dexterae meae*, 1666: 2122–2123)
>
> [This is what Wisdom says in Prov. 25.4: 'Remove rust from silver and a very pure vase will be the result'. Remove the rust, in other words original sin which marks the soul like rust, remove it from silver, in other words the soul of the Blessed Mary, who is like silver because of her nobility and a very pure vase will result, for before she was born and issued forth, she was purified and cleansed of original sin.]

Miralles associates pure metal with alchemy again later in his 1486 *certamen* poem and this provides a different way of categorizing opponents of the doctrine: 'Hi ·ls que diran contra ço rahons tristes, / pobres prelats iran com alquimistes' [And those who come up with sad reasons against it / poor prelates will be like alchemists] (456, ll.84–85). A reference made to alchemy by Eithne Wilkins helps in elucidating Miralles's choice of comparator. Alchemists 'had solid tradition behind them when they called the rose *flos sapientium*, the flower of those who had "the Wisdom"'. Yet they were equating the rose not with the Holy Spirit but with the soul perfected through toil. The *rosarium*, or compilation of knowledge, equates to what alchemists called the Work. The allusion to alchemy plunges the hearer into the concentric circles surrounding the rose and the attainment of human knowledge. Perhaps Miralles intends

his reference to mean that the maculists are in search of the pure metal of the truth, but only end up with a base product, in other words, with dishonouring the Virgin. Perhaps he intends to counterpoint the search for self-perfection with failure to recognize perfection predestined, the perfect rose, unstained from the beginning of time, 'the type of the perfected soul, the one who has "attained the rose"' (1969: 113).

Valencian poets may also have responded to the theological, liturgical, and biblical texts about gold because the city was a centre of goldsmithing in the fifteenth century. The Valencians were renowned for their skills and made a number of pieces of jewellery for royal patrons (Sanchis y Sivera 1922: 4). The *certamen* entrants' familiarity with production of gold and silver pieces may explain their interest in it. At least one of them was a silversmith. Lluís Cathalà's contrast of gold with other metals in his entry to the 1486 *certamen*, where appropriately he was contesting the prize of the ruby, points to another connection between gold and Valencia. Cathalà, about whom little is known apart from his entries to the 1474 and 1486 *certàmens*, moves from the concept of the range of metals in nature to a description of gold:

> Dels quals lo més pur bell or se nomena,
> qui té de valer més alta la cima,
> hi resta perfet sens ombra neguna
> d'aquell fonament que scuredat mostra. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 479, ll.52–55)
>
> [Of (metals) the purest is called beautiful gold
> which has the highest value,
> and remains perfect without any shadow
> of that flux which shows forth dark traces.]

He decribes gold as 'lo més pur' [the purest], thus drawing out the comparison with his subject, the Virgin Mary, purest of all because of her immaculate origins, and comments also on its value, 'té de valor més alta la cima' [it has the highest rate of value].

Valencia was an important merchant centre, where payment in pure gold would have resonated with the audience because it meant that merchants received the full price for their goods. Coinage debasement including clipping of coins was a very real danger for merchants in medieval Spain (Ardzrooni 1913: 446). Centelles takes a familiar concept of pure gold coins tainted with a mixture of lead: 's'enploma' to represent the effect original sin would have had on the Virgin:

> Lo gran sacerdot sanct papa de Roma,
> de l'orde sacrat qui tal ver confessa,

mirant que l'or net per culpa s'enploma,
dient preservada per letra, per ploma
nos mana digam ¡o pura deessa!
mudant la moneda d'aquell primer cambi
en or tostemps pur pagant lo recambi. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 501, ll.18–24)

[The great priest, the Holy Father of Rome
of the sacred Order which such truth confesses,
seeing that clean gold was being debased by the lead of sin
indicating her preserved by letter and by pen,
orders us to affirm, o pure goddess!
changing the coinage of that first payment
in pure unchangeable gold paying for the exchange.]

Money-changing is used to represent the grace operated in the Virgin 'mudant la moneda'. The Fall is described as 'aquell primer cambi' [the first payment] from which the Virgin restores the human race: 'pagant lo recambi' [paying for the exchange]. The change must be effected through the Incarnation, although the poet does not say. The Virgin takes the role of Co-Redemptrix. He steps over the limits assigned to the Virgin by calling her 'deessa' [goddess]. He then refers to the intervention of the Pope to preserve the Virgin as 'or pur' [pure gold]. The Pope mentioned by Centelles is Sixtus IV, who recognized the feast of the Immaculate Conception. He belonged to the Franciscans, described in the poem as the sacred Order.

The Light Passing through Glass

The traditional metaphor of sunlight shining on glass, used to describe the way Mary could give birth without her body being corrupted, is found from the fourteenth century onwards as a symbol of her unstained nature. An anonlymous Catalan poet celebrates the Virgin's freedom from original sin in a poem dating from 1329–1332, 'Lirs virginals' [virginal lilies], which has been identified as a possible entry to a *certamen* (1983: 69). The poet proclaims the Virgin 'sola fos d'original munda' [you alone were clean of original sin] and provides 'un dels primers testimonis poètics de les controvèrsies immaculistes' [one of the earliest poetic testimonies of the immaculist controversies] (1983: 76, l.29, 74). 'Lirs virginals' was written just twenty-five years after the Scotus controversy had arisen. Its presence in Valencian *certamen* history is testimony to the extraordinary influence of Ramon Llull in the

kingdom of Aragon as well as to the official support for the doctrine accorded by successive kings (1983: 73).

The second stanza can be read as confirmation of immaculist adherence but it provides important evidence of how images applied to aspects of doctrine about the Virgin were prone to transfer:

> Veixell sagrat d'on pres carn e figura,
> figura d'om le Deus que us figura
> ffigura ·l cors ez aysi l'apura,
> Si co·l soleylls le clos veyre trespasa
> e ges no ·l romp ney dexa colpa ne ·l maca
> aysi fonch nats, Verges, sens nulla taca,
> cel vostre cors qui tot lo mon abrasa. (1983: 75, ll.9–16)
>
> [Sacred vessel in which the God who formed you
> took flesh and form of man
> he shaped the body and purified it
> just as the sun passes through closed glass
> and does not break it and does not leave a mark or taint
> so you were born, Virgin, without any blemish,
> heaven your body which sets the whole world on fire.]

The stanza affords a literary example of the transfer of the image of sunlight passing through glass, formerly reserved for description of the Virgin Birth. It now marks the moment when grace is conferred by the Holy Spirit and the pre-birth sanctification of the Virgin (Hirn 1928: 33–39).[6] In the second stanza, the poet focuses 'sens nulla taca' [without any stain] on the Virgin's birth rather than her conception without sin.

Alfonso the Wise, writing less than a hundred years earlier, had used the image of light passing through glass to exemplify the Virgin Birth:

> E desto vos mostro prova verdadeira
> Do sol quando fer dentro ena vidreira,
> Que pero a passa, en nulla maneira

[6] The image is also discussed by James W. Marchand & Spurgeon Baldwin (1994: 175–176). They cite from Gil de Zamora's *Officium*, noting that he also uses the sun image, although the glass is not mentioned:

> sicut emittit radium
> sol absque lesione
> sic Virgo dedit filium
> sine corruptione.
>
> [Just as the sun emitted
> its ray without damaging,
> just as the Virgin brought forth her son
> without corruption.]

Non fica britada de como siya.
Que macar o vidro do sol filla lume,
Nulla ren a luz do vidro non consume;
Outrossi foi desto que contra costume
Foi madre e virgen, ca Deus xo queria. (1959–1964: III, 381, ll.25–33)

[And I show you true proof of this.
For the sun, when it moves inside a window-pane
yet passes it, and never
makes any mark on its nature.
For sunlight filters, staining the glass,
but the light does not consume anything of the glass;
thus it was, in this case, which is unlike any other,
she was mother and virgin, for God willed it so.]

Berceo too associated it with the Virgin Birth, and with both the Virgin's *virginitas in partu* and *post partum*. Like Alfonso, he emphasizes the way the light leaves the glass undamaged:

Parist e mamantesti e non fust corrompida.

[…]
En el vidrio podría asmar esta razón,
Como lo pasa el rayo del sol sin lesion;
Tú así engendresti sin nulla corrupción
Como si te passasses por una visïón. (1975: 106–107, ll.218.c, 219.a-d)

[You gave birth and gave suck and were not corrupted.
In glass can this point be understood,
as the ray of light passes through it without any damage;
so you bore a child without any corruption,
as though you were passing through a vision.]

The image of the sunlight and the glass, provide a perfect explanation of how Christ's body could pass through the Virgin's without damaging it. By the early fourteenth century, the image showed how preserving grace could pass into her body and sanctify it before birth, even though she came of stock tainted by original sin.

Opponents of the Doctrine: The Maculists

Poets, particularly in the 1486 *certamen*, place enormous emphasis on discrediting views opposing the Immaculate Conception. In Chapter 5, I showed how the maculists were thought to have ranged themselves alongside the serpent, falling victim to its wiles, and now I discuss the way the poets believed they stained the Virgin's honour. For 'màcula'

and 'manzilla' not only describe the stainlessness of the Virgin but they can be reversed to show the moral turpitude of opponents of the Immaculate Conception.

Tallante refers to opposition to the doctrine, and uses 'centella' [speck, spark] to express the idea of the mark made by original sin: 'concluya confuso quel que concede / que te aya de culpa centella tocada' [He who concedes that any speck of sin has touched you / comes to a confusing conclusion] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 117, ll.7–8). 'Centella' provides a variant on 'manzilla', emphasizing its minuscule size. It focuses attention on the issue of the single moment in which Mary was believed to have contracted original sin and also on those, who, like the Dominicans, believe in it. The outcome of the debate is that opponents of the doctrine are befuddled by their own logic: 'concluya confuso'.

Whilst Tallante refers to debate over the doctrine and conclusions reached, Roïç points to the weak nature of the arguments on which opponents of the doctrine rely. Roïç takes the opportunity to revile those who claim that original sin can be present in the Virgin because it is not an actual sin, adding that those who argue for its presence in her 'us donen escusa molt flaca' [give a very lame excuse] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 490, l.63). He links 'flaca' with 'taca' through his rhyme scheme and its position at the end of the line gives it emphasis in the stanza: 'Mas yo dich que us donen escusa molt flaca, / que l'ànima bella, la carn si la taca / la pena reporta de gran malefici' [But I say they give a very lame excuse / for the beautiful soul, if the flesh stains it / bears the punishment of wrongdoing] (ll.63–65). Roïç's poem, which won the prize for which it was entered, has greater theological correctness than literary merit: 'La composició de Lluís Roís no ten cap relleu poètic' [Lluís Roís's poem shows no poetic value] (Ferrando Francés 1983: 422). The fact that the judges valued theological correctness over literary merit is indicative of the climate in Valencia in the period. Denigration of the views of maculists was also of great importance to the instigator of the 1486 *certamen*, Ferrando Dieç.

In his study of medieval satire and invective, Kenneth Scholberg defines four categories of invective: misogynist, satirical attack on religious Orders, satire of customs and vices, and moral satire (1971: 190–226). His four types of satire can be extended, because those who defend the maculist viewpoint in the conflict over the Immaculate Conception, although they are castigated for their religious affiliation, for their heretic or *converso* leanings, and for their moral turpitude, the main

focus of the invective against them is that they are maculist. Maculists may constitute either a sub-group of attack on moral turpitude or on religious affiliation.

Attack on maculists is not confined to the kingdom of Aragon. *Cancionero* poets used invective in their debates and those about the Immaculate Conception are no different:

> Por la dulçe, gloriosa
> Virgo, responde Fray Lope
> a vos, que tenéis vascosa
> ferida de falso golpe; (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 568, l.1–4)
>
> [On behalf of the sweet, glorious Virgin
> Fray Lope replies
> to you who place her in sin
> wounded with a false blow;]

Given that theologians use *sine vicio* as an alternative to *sine peccato*, Dutton & Krogstadt's reading (568, l.3) must be challenged. William of Middleton states in *Quaestiones de sanctificatione* (BMT 737, fol. 37^{v}, cited by Lamy 2000: 248, n.37): 'Sed constat quod magno privilegio matri Dei ascriberetur si materia corporis illius *sine vicio* esset propagata' [but it is right that if her bodily matter were propagated without sin, it would be by great privilege of the Mother of God]. The interpretation of 'vascosa' as 'visciosa' is borne out by other immaculist writers, who also use it. Berenguer Cardona in the poem he submitted to the 1474 *certamen* addresses opponents of the doctrine directly and also points to their error in placing the Virgin in 'peccat viciosa'. Cardona was a Valencian notary and the rubric to the poem characterizes him as 'honorable e discret' (269):

> Levau, levau, senyor, dels hulls la bena
> perquè veureu en clar a totes parts.
> E no tingau los hulls axí ·nlaçats,
> mas que guardeu, com fa ·l que ·s desenbena,
> y en clar mirant de quant és graciosa
> com meresqué, Verge, per ser humil,
> per mer ésser d'aquell Déu tan gentil,
> que sol moment
> no ·s pot trobar del peccat viciosa. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 272, ll.37–45)
>
> [Lift, o lift, Lord, the binding from their eyes
> so that they can see clearly to all sides
> and do not have their eyes covered up
> but keep them, like a man who uncovers his eyes

and clearly looking at how full of grace she is
as you merited, Virgin, for your humbleness,
and being mother of that gentle God,
not for one moment
could sin be found.]

Cardona uses indirect questions to establish what is fitting for the Virgin, appealing to the reason of his audience: '¿Qui pot dir qu·ajau participat / lo vil insult / que ·n general a tot lo món desgasta?' [Who could say that she had been involved in the vile insult / which in general damages everyone] (ll.25–27). Another indirect question categorizes opponents of Cardona's views as blind: '¿Qui viu tan cech que ·s prengua en tal parança' [Who is so blind that he is caught in such a position] (l.19). After the exhortation to the doubtful listener to open his eyes: 'Obriu los hulls' (l.28), at the beginning of the stanza, the poet next exhorts the audience to raise their eyes and consider the truth 'en clar mirant' [seeing clearly] (l.41). His exhortation to opponents of the doctrine to change their view, because they cannot see clearly, is similar to the sentiments expressed by fray Lope. Finally, Cardona uses the term 'viciosa' to describe the slur placed on the Virgin by opponents of the doctrine: 'que sol moment / no ·s pot trobar del peccat viciosa' [for a single moment, she could not be seen to be damaged by sin] (ll.44–45).

Fray Lope uses the idea of wounding, with a false, unfair, wrong, or illegal blow to describe the methods employed by the maculists in their attacks on the Virgin. The whole of Martínez de Medina's poem, in response to this outburst, is defensive and short in comparison to Fray Lope's. Martínez de Medina gives the impression from this point onwards that he has taken on more than he bargained for. This is strange, given the vehement defence of the doctrine in the late medieval period. He could have hardly expected a lesser response from his opponent. Interestingly, it is the very point of having caused the Virgin to be 'ferida de falso golpe' [wounded with a false blow], or dishonouring the Virgin, which Diego Martínez decides to reject. He also stoutly rejects fray Lope's statement that the maculists wish to stain the nature of the Virgin: 'diciendo / que malamente la tienen por ensuziada' [saying that they are wrongly holding her as sullied]:

Manzilla de ensuziamento
non ponen pedricadores
en ella, que sin dolores
parió e sin ningún tormento; (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 574, ll.17–20)

[With besmirching stain
the Preachers do not taint her,
for she bore a child without pain
and without any torment;]

The poetic debate is about what is honourable to the Virgin, and in this way it touches on the argument raised by Scotus and his followers, that the possibility that was most honourable to the Virgin should be attributed to her. Di Lella summarizes and translates the point made by Aureoli, which takes into account the Virgin's subjection to the results of the Fall at the beginning and end of her life: 'It is more honourable for the Virgin not to be stained by original sin, even more so than not to be reduced to dust after death' (1955: 153).

Conclusion

It has become clear that poets in the fifteenth century regard the Song of Songs verse 4.7 as a key way of providing biblical underpinning for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It is used by many of the defenders of the doctrine in both Castilian and Catalan contexts. Because of one of the *certàmens* being dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, most examples are found in the kingdom of Aragon. Castilian poems which use it are dedicated to a different purpose, whether general praise of Mary or expositions of her Joys, but when references to the Song of Songs are used, they may still be interpreted as immaculist in intent.

Poets' frequent use of concepts drawn from the Song of Songs 4.7 may lie in the association between staining, which suggests damaging and spoiling, and the opposition between good and evil at the heart of the doctrine. Some poets seek to foreground allusion to the Fall by depicting staining as the action of the serpent or worm, which corrupts matter and leads humankind to its downfall. Connection of sinlessness to the worm or serpent, which causes decay and spoiling in matter, is made explicit by Vallmanya and Tallante. Such an image of destruction and decay, closely mirrors the effects of the Fall and pinpoints the opposition between the stainless Virgin and the serpent. The opposition between the Virgin, able to confront the serpent, with its corrupting activities, because she is not in his power, is always subliminally present when Mary is depicted as the bride unblemished.

I have shown that, although Song of Songs references are, on occasion, found in early Hispanic poems, where there is no clear immaculist context, they are also found in later medieval poems, where there are unmistakeable immaculist declarations or titles. 'Inmaculada', 'sens màcula', and 'sin manzilla' are used in such immaculist poems to echo *macula* in the Song of Songs. Pre-fifteenth-century usage of 'sin manciella' / 'sen mazela' shows that context is all-important, since poets can use the epithet without connection to the doctrine of Mary Immaculate, although they may show a preoccupation with sinlessness. The term 'inmaculada' is less common in Castilian than in Catalan poetry and, in the light of liturgical usage, cannot be identified solely with the Conception. 'Sin manzilla' and 'sens màcula' are often found in combination with further references to the Song of Songs. Poets also take the opportunity to reverse the Virgin's stainlessness to point out that opponents of the doctrine, the maculists, are staining her by not recognizing it.

Many poets, both Castilian and Catalan, as well as using terms etymologically connected with the Song of Songs verse frequently use synonyms. Some variation on the theme of the Virgin's unblemished nature is found in *cancionero* poems but most of the variants are found in Catalan poetry because of their more conceptual approach to the doctrine and because they are writing specifically for those determined to ensure its defence. Of particular interest is the image of the light passing through glass, which, as early as the first decades of the fourteenth century, provides evidence of its transfer from application to the Virgin Birth to the Immaculate Conception. A favoured way of expressing Mary's pure unblemished nature is found in allusions to alchemy, and gold- and silversmithing, used on a number of occasions by Valencian poets, most notably by Roig and Tallante. These allusions rework the twelfth-century argument that Mary's flesh was part of a pure thread of gold. They reveal the Valencians' knowledge of twelfth-century defence of the doctrine and their willingness to draw on such defence in their poetry. *Cancionero* poets betray less inclination to develop extended metaphors for the doctrine and fewer synonyms or variants are found in the 1474 *certamen*, suggesting either that tastes had changed or that the dedication of a competition to the Conception led to a different approach being taken.

Cancionero poets have less opportunity to develop the theme of sinlessness because there are fewer poems dedicated to the theme of the Immaculate Conception. Poets are content to use the most recogniz-

able titles for the Virgin, since this quickly anchors the stanza within the particular stage of her life to which they refer. Many of the Marian poems in the *cancioneros* comprise litanies of epithets, although it is true that these often contain references to sinlessness. In the *cancioneros*, it is Tallante's work, with its Valencian connections, which shows most evidence of development on the theme.

The Song of Songs inspired poets in their descriptions of Mary as unblemished and sinless, providing many biblical prefigurations of the Immaculate Conception, but it was also to inspire another important element of how she was characterized in poetry. It was to inspire the way in which she was depicted as completely and perfectly beautiful. Her beauty, together with its many attributes, was to develop into one of the principal depictions of the Immaculate Conception in breviary miniatures and in woodcuts in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ROSE-GARDEN: BEAUTY AND PURITY

Since the nineteenth century scholarly consensus has been that the Song of Songs was written as a series of love songs. However, the incorporation of wedding songs into the Jewish corpus of religious texts has been rejected by J. Cheryl Exum (2006: 79), in the belief that the Song of Songs had already been given a spiritual meaning long before the Christian era. A young girl sings and is sung to and was sought out for both for her unblemished features but also for her beautiful physical form. She is dark-skinned but beautiful, her cheeks like the skin of pomegranate, the joints of her thighs like jewels, her breasts like a cluster of grapes (Song of Songs 1.4, 6.6, 7.1, 7.8). Many different flowers, such as the lily of the valley and the lily among thorns (2.1, 2.2), are used to express the girl's beauty in its verses.[1] She is also the 'flos campi' [flower of the field] (2.1), which can be translated as the rose of Sharon (*NJB* 1985: 1031). I will examine examples of the association between the Virgin and the beautiful young girl of the Song of Songs in the first part of the chapter, as well as demonstrating the influence of rose imagery in courtly love and religious poems, before looking at a new way in which the Song of Songs was linked to the Virgin and her Immaculate Conception in the second section. To do so, I will look at two connected prefigurations of the Virgin, the rose of Sharon from the Song of Songs and also the rose bush, from Ecclesiasticus 24.18.

There is little indication in the Bible of the importance that the image of the rose was to play when it became associated with the Virgin Mary. The rose of Sharon is used only once to describe the beauty of the young woman but there is not even consensus about how it should be translated. Matter translates it as the flower of the field (1990: xviii) but it might better be translated as crocus (Pope 1983: 364). Marvin H. Pope traces the translation as rose of Sharon to Aquila and to the *Codex Venetius*, where it is rendered *rodon* (367).

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[1] The second canticle is called a *Beschreibungsleid* because of its function (Murphy 1990: 136).

It is not even the most frequently used of the floral images. Lily is associated three times with the young woman (2.1, 2.2, 6.3). Yet the rose has become the flower most allied to the Virgin Mary, it has inspired artistic representations of her, it has crowned her, it has become central to devotion to her in the form of the rosary. Matter has traced the way in which Song of Songs commentary passed into vernacular literature (1990: 178–200), although she takes no account of the parallel development of the rose as an element of traditional lyric.

The emblematic presence of the rosebud at the moment of consummation of sexual love is common in traditional lyric, where plucking roses signifies loss of virginity. One lyric from the *Cancionero de la Colombina*, in which a young woman sings of how she goes out to cut a rose, early one morning, evokes availability and conquest. The song is included in Margit Frenk's corpus of traditional lyrics at 314 (1987: 149–150), where she interprets it as the representation of a meeting of lovers. Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego includes it in his anthology of women's voices in the *cancioneros*, as an example of the female voice in traditional lyric:

> Niña y viña, peral y habar
> Malo es de guardar
> Levantéme o madre
> Mañanica frida
> Fui a cortar la rosa
> La rosa florida
> Malo es de guardar (Pérez Priego 1989: 123–124)
>
> [Girl and vine, pear tree and field of beans,
> hard it is to supervise.
> [I arose, mother dear,
> on a chill morning
> I went to cut the rose.
> The rose in bloom
> hard it is to supervise.]

The lyric emphasizes how transient is the beauty of the full-blown rose: 'malo es de guardar'. Deyermond points out the darker elements in the setting, like the chilliness of the morning, which underpin the story with a sense of foreboding.[2] He examines this *villancico* in his study of

[2] More recently, Frenk identified a new lyric, which incorporates part of 'niña y viña' (1998: 43). She notes that picking roses as a symbol for a meeting with one's lover has been studied by Pierre Bec (1981), Paula Olinger (1985: 122), and Mariana Masera (1995: 216–221) and indicates that the chill setting is traditional.

the influence of the Bible on medieval literature, underlining how the plucking of the rose is an 'imagen frecuentísima de la pérdida de la virginidad femenina'. He anchors the origins of its sensuality in the Song of Songs (1989c: 196–198).

The rose has a range of symbolic meanings in European medieval literature, connected to expression of the archetypal female but as well to consummation of love and desire. In one of the most influential of medieval texts, the *Roman de la Rose*, it represents youthful, feminine beauty, the awakening of sexual desire, and conquest:

> Par les rains saisi le rosier,
> qui plus sunt franc que nul osier;
> et quant a II. mains m'i poi joindre
> tretout soavet, sans moi poindre,
> le bouton pris a elloichier
> qu'anviz l'eüsse san hoichier. (1975: III, 152, ll.21675–21680)
>
> [I seized the rose bush by the branches
> which are fresher than any willow;
> and, when I could reach round with two hands
> softly, without pricking myself,
> took the rosebud and moved it,
> for then I could take it without shaking.]

In *cancionero* love lyrics, the rose can be synonymous both with the perfect beauty of the beloved and with her youth. Álvarez de Villasandino, for example, terms Enrique II's mistress, Juana de Sosa (1353 or 1354–1442), 'linda rosa, flor d'abril' [beautiful rose, flower of April] (ID1193) (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 72, ll.6, 11, 29).[3] In the same poem, other flower imagery is used to describe her: 'clavellina angelical [carnation of angels]', 'linda muy fermosa flor' [lovely and most beautiful flower]. For Francisco Imperial (1350–1409), a poet from Seville but probably of Genoese origin, the rose is an emblem of the fresh, unspoilt beauty of his lady, in his famous *dezir* 'por amor e loores de una muger de Sevilla que llamó el Estrella Diana' [for the love and

[3] Several of the *cantigas* (lyric poems) by Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino in the *Cancionero de Baena* are dedicated to Juana. These are ID 1158, ID 1159, ID 1160, ID 1162, ID 0544, ID 1164, ID 0132, ID 1165, ID 1168, ID 1186, ID 1188, ID 1191, ID 1193 (see Dutton & González Cuenca 1983: 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 66, 68, 70, 71). Dutton and González Cuenca indicate that they were written between 1374 and 1378, although some of the poems are dated 1379 (25, 66). Dutton & González Cuenca do not include ID 1191 and ID 1193 in the index entry on Juana de Sosa, although their notes on the rubrics indicate that they consider the last two to be dedicated to her. (On the Sosas, see Beltrán Pepió 2003.)

praise of a lady of Seville called the Star of Diana] (ID1366). He uses it as part of a litany of flowers: '[…] demostrarme quiso / la muy delicada flor de jazmín, / rosa novela de oliente jardín, / e de verde prado gentil flor de liso' [she wished to show me the delicate jasmine flower, / the rosebud in a scented garden, and the sweet lily in the green meadow] (280, ll.9–12). In Imperial's poem the heady sensuality of the flowers can be interpreted as consummation of love. Its symbolism allows the rose-garden shown to the poet by the lady to symbolize both unspoilt virginity or the female sexual organs. Both Matter (1990: 178–200) and Peter Dronke emphasize how 'much of the language used in medieval lyric has a sacred and a profane potential' (1979: 243). The suggestive nature of the floral symbolism is particularly appropriate if the lady addressed is Isabel González, mistress of Juan Alfonso de Guzmán, Conde de Niebla (d.1396), as the rubrics of several poems indicate (ID 1373; ID 1374; ID 1455) (290, 291, 583). Jane Whetnall convincingly proves that Isabel González was a poet. Diego Martínez de Medina refers to her as 'muy eçelente poeta' and describes her poetic skills with some awe (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 584, l.6). Whetnall speculates why none of González's poetry has been preserved in the *cancioneros*, despite the high regard in which Martínez de Medina holds her (1992–1993).

The Virgin Mary and the Rose in Liturgy

The rose is used widely in all the Marian offices and was incorporated into Conception offices too. It is used to symbolize different aspects of the Virgin's nature. For example, in the Barcelona breviary where the rose accompanies the lily, as an antiphon at lauds, it symbolizes the Virgin's motherhood, 'florens', and her saintliness, 'fragrans': 'maria uirgo non est tibi s[im]ilis concepta in mundo inter mulieres. Florens ut rosa. Fragrans sicut lilium ora pro nobis s[an]c[t]a dei genetrix' (AEV 83, fol. 468^{r}) [Virgin Mary, there is none like you conceived in the world among women. Blossoming as the rose. Fragrant as the lily, pray for us, holy Mother of God]. In a Lerida breviary (ACLl 16, fol. 437^{r}), rose imagery infuses a response at third night prayer in the Conception office: 'Ex iudea processisti mater dei gloriosa. Sicut pulcra rosa de spinis immaculosa' [Out of Judea you have proceeded, glorious mother of God. Just like a beautiful rose unblemished from the thorns]. The rose symbolizes the Virgin's genealogy. 'Ex iudea' has already

differentiated Mary from her patriarchal ancestry and the contrast is replicated by the liturgist's use of the rose and the thorns from which it springs.

In Castilian Conception offices, the rose is found as the first antiphon at first vespers: 'Gaude mater ecclesia noua frequentans gaudia lux micat de caligine rosa de spine germinat' [Rejoice, mother church, celebrating new joys. The light shines in the darkness. The rose on the thorn blooms] (BN Res. 186, fol. 424^{r}).[4] In the antiphon the difference between sin and new life is symbolized by darkness and light but the rose with its thorn parallels the two shades of light. 'Sicut rosa inter spinas' is a response following the second lesson, which is an extract from the miracle story of Helsin's voyage, in the same set of breviaries from the Toledo archdiocese. It is followed by 'Germinavit enim flor qui vitalem dat odorem' [the flower has germinated which exudes life-giving scent].

Like the accompanying light image, the rose is used with a contrastive purpose, becoming one of the principal images of Mary. Mary is the rose, which springs from the thorn: 'rosa de spine' [the rose from thorn] at the opening of the first vespers of the Hieronymite breviary (BN Res.186). Situated at the opening of the Conception office, the antiphon's emphasis is on contrasting Mary with previous generations of her family and, indeed, with the remainder of humanity. The image of the rose, like that of light, is developed elsewhere in the office. The rose is also the subject of a versicle which follows the third reading: 'sicut rosa inter spinas' [as the rose among thorns] (fol. 424^{v}). In the first words following the reading, the liturgist emphasizes the difference between the nature of Mary and that of other human beings, without specific terms of reference. It is possible that the contrast between Mary and other women is behind the use of the rose among thorns. The contrast draws on the attributes of each. Mary is the rose, with all its properties, such as outstanding fragrance, colour, and beautiful form, and the remainder of humanity is described as thistles or thorns which surround the flower and from which it stands out. The characteristics of the thorn bushes are that they are spiky, and therefore, have a propensity to damage those who engage with them; they are also intertwined,

[4] Other Toledo breviaries with the same opening antiphon, and the same response are the *Breviario romano adaptado al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN 9082), fol. 716^{r}; *Breviario de Toledo adaptado al uso del convento de Uclés* (BN 8902), fol. 325^{v}; *Breviarium toletanum* (33.6), fol. 451^{v}; *Varia ascetica* (Montserrat 830), fol. 109^{r}.

suggesting the interconnected transmission of original sin. Each thorn is indistinguishable from the others.

The same office has a preface sung after the third reading, which hinges on 'bloomed' in the first versicle; this time the image of the rose has different emphasis for it is linked more closely to fragrance: 'germinauit enim florem qui uitalem dat odorem' [for the flower which gives forth the fragrance of life, has bloomed]. In this response, the liturgy highlights how the scent of the rose is dependent on the Incarnation, since Mary's role as Mother of Christ is the source of the scent, which is life-giving to others.

At the second night prayer, Mary's fruitfulness is taken up in two associated images. The first night prayer ends on the repetition of 'germinauit' (fol. 424^{v}), which is then picked up at the opening of the second night prayer. The second night prayer opens on the concept of the image of the 'fructifera' [fruitful] rod of Aaron, which bursts into bud.

The concept of fruitfulness is a constant thread through the office. In the opening antiphon at third night prayer, there is first an antiphon on the subject of the promise made to Abraham (Genesis 15.5), about the way in which God intends to multiply his progeny. In the second antiphon, which answers and completes the first, it is Mary's offspring who will sow the grain from which the ears of wheat will spring. This agricultural image, like that of the rose, centres on provenance and fruitfulness.

The Gerona version of Juan de Segovia's Conception office provides an even better example of how liturgists sought to contrast good and evil through their use of the image of the rose. In the response following the sixth reading, the way human nature has been damaged by the 'auctor mortis diabolus' [author of death, the devil] provides a context for two images which highlight how Mary's nature differs from that of other members of the human race. The first is similar to that in the opening antiphon of the Hieronymite breviary (BN Res.186), in that it brings together a light image and the image of the rose. In the case of the Gerona breviary (ACG 125), Mary is first described as the gold shining in the darkness (see also Chapter 6). The liturgist chooses to associate with Mary's nature the way the most precious of metals gleams and announces its presence. In the second part of the response, as in the Hieronymite breviary (BN Res.186), the rose is contrasted with the thorns from which it springs:

> R / Auctor mortis diabolus ab exordio genus viciauit humanum. Sed aurum fulgens reperitur in luto. Et ex pungente spina pulcra rubens oritur rosa.
> V / Ex radice uiciata sine uicio p[ro]diit uirga iesse maria. (*Breviarium gerundense*, ACG 125, fol. 6[r])
>
> [R / The author of death, the devil, from the beginning, harmed the human race. But shining gold is found in the gloom. And from the pricking thorns, the beautiful, blushing rose comes forth.
> V / From the blemished root of Jesse comes forth Mary without sin.]

The thorns are further categorized as 'pungente' [pricking, pointed], whilst the rose is described as 'rubens' [blushing]. In this set of responses Segovia is more explicit about the thorn's connection to the devil and to original sin.

Also from the Gerona cluster of liturgies, in a *Breviarium gerundense* from the church of San Feliu, the liturgist refers to Mary as lily of the valley, the rose of Sharon or flower of the field, and as rose-garden:

> Plaudat mater ecclesia sanctificauit penitus in aluo matris gratia mariam sancti spiritus Gabriel nunciam tulit missus diuinitus. Cuius carne innoxi ihs est nobis deditus sicut lilium uirgo conuallium et flos campi dei rosarium ipsa n[ost]ros delectet exitus. (ADG 15)
>
> [Mother Church rejoices, the grace of the Holy Spirit has sanctified Mary in her mother's womb. Gabriel brought the message sent from heaven. From her unblemished flesh, Jesus was given to us. Just as the lily of the valley and the flower of the field, the rose-garden of God, her birth is a delight to us.]

Although I have discovered a range of examples of how the rose without thorn is found in Conception offices, it is not found exclusively there. The antiphon 'maria uirgo non est tibi similis' from the Barcelona breviary is used for the Nativity in a Lerida breviary (ACLl 16, fol. 382[v]). Breviaries from the Lerida diocese, like the one from Rodà in the foothills of the Pyrenees, use the rose image in the Nativity office: 'Sicut spina rosam genuit iudea maria[m]' [just as the thorn brings forth the rose so Judea Mary] (ACLl Rc-0026, fol. 381[v]; ACLl 16, 383[r]). Its presence in the Nativity offices would suggest easy transfer to the Conception office because of its suitability to express Mary's essence. Yet, for this very reason, in the same diocese, it is also used as a response in the feast of the Expectation (fol. 438[v]).

Some of the hymns recorded in Peninsular sources incorporate rose imagery, such as the early fourteenth-century Assumption hymn found in Gerona and Vich breviaries, *Ave maria gratia plena* (RH 1876): 'rosa

sine spina / genitrix es facta' [rose without thorn, becomes a mother] (ADG 9, fol. 316^{v}; ADG 14, fol. 352^{r}; ACG 125, fol. 529^{v}; AEV 84, fol. 387^{r}; AEV 85, fol. 127^{r}). The hymn is found in a variety of Marian offices, including Conception offices in other parts of Europe. There is, however, no reference to the rose in any of the Conception hymns recorded in the Peninsula.

The Virgin Mary and the Rose in Early Medieval Poetry

Biblical verses about the rose and the rose-garden became prefigurations of the Virgin, drawing on and fusing with the long tradition of the rose as a symbol of feminine beauty (Woolf 1968: 287). Religious lyrics (particularly those addressed to the Virgin) make extensive use of the language of the *fin amour* of the secular poets. More fundamentally, poets saw the Virgin in the same terms that they saw their lady-love (Gray 1972: 56), so that earthly and celestial beauty fuse. In English lyric, the conventions for female beauty are followed for the Virgin. She is 'gent and small. So fair and so briht' (Woolf 1968: 125). The Virgin of the *Cantigas* is not dissimilar. She too is 'vella e minya' (1959–1964: II, 198, ll.2), is 'akin to a typical lady of the courtly tradition', and her beauty is not mere 'theological abstraction' (Sturm 1970: 6).

Juan Ruiz in his 'Del Ave María de Santa María' addresses the Virgin as 'limpia rosa' in the stanza glossing the *Dominus tecum*. His 'Ave Maria' follows the traditional structure of such gloss poems with one stanza dedicated to each line of the prayer. In the stanza which glosses *Dominus tecum*, Ruiz incorporates a litany of laudatory epithets for the Virgin: star, medicine, and rose. Ruiz's invocation of the Virgin as 'linpia rosa' is set against his desire that the Virgin preserve him from folly 'que me guardes […] de follia'. The effect of addressing her as 'linpia rosa' and as 'virtüosa' is to contrast with the 'follia' in which the ordinary sinner lives. She is free from folly and from concupiscence:

> *Dominus tecum*, estrella
> resplandeçiente
> melezina de coidados,
> catadura muy bella
> reluziente
> sin manzilla de pecados,
> por los tus gozos preçiados

te pido, virtüosa,
que me guardes, linpia rosa,
de follia.

[*Dominus tecum*, resplendent
star,
medicine for those in travail,
beautiful outward appearance,
shining
without stain of sins,
for the sake of your precious joys
I beseech you, virtuous one,
keep me, unblemished rose,
from folly.]

Ruiz praises a range of aspects of the Virgin, including her power of healing and of salvation ('melezina'), her purity ('linpia rosa'), and her beauty ('catadura'). He begins the stanza by expressing the threefold relationship between God and the Virgin, in *Dominus tecum*, in the coming of the Holy Spirit with grace, in the selection of the Virgin for her role by God the Father, and in the coming of the child into her womb. He has already used the term 'sin manzilla' (l.1662) to describe the Virgin's nature, immediately after the opening invocation in the 'Ave Maria'. 'Sin manzilla' is repeated in the central verse of the *Dominus tecum* stanza as 'sin manzilla de pecados' (see Chapter 6), where it is paired with 'reluziente' [shining, gleaming]. Its position, as well as its repetition, is an indication of its importance to Ruiz.

He invokes flower imagery again in 'bendicha flor e rosa', as part of his gloss on the *Benedicta tu*:

Benedita tu, onrada,
sin egualeza,
siendo virgen conçebiste,
de los ángeles loada
en alteza:
por el fijo que pariste,
¡o bendicha flor e rosa!,
tu me guarda, pïadosa,
e me guia. (1995: ll.1663–1664)

[*Benedicta tu*, honoured,
without equal,
even a virgin you conceived
praised by the angels
on high:
for the son you bore,

O blessed flower and rose!,
keep me, merciful one,
and guide me.]

Ruiz begins by praising the Virgin for being 'sin egualeza' [without equal], he then praises her for her virginity. Ruiz dedicates four lines to Mary as Virgin and Mother. The stanza ends, as the previous one did, with an invocation to the Virgin, emphasizing her ability to guide sinners. Ruiz sets the unblemished nature of the rose-Virgin in the context of the Incarnation and the bloom she bears, Christ.

Superlative terms of address for the Virgin are a feature of many medieval poems. Poets often use what has been termed a Hebrew superlative, 'rosa das rosas' [rose of roses] to emphasize the exceptional nature of the Virgin, often in terms of her beauty but also of her morality. Alfonso the Wise does not use flower imagery often to describe or praise the Virgin but his well-known *Cantiga*, 'Rosa das rosas' [rose of roses], is one of the most iconic descriptors of the Virgin in Hispanic literature:

Rosa das rosas e Fror das frores,
Dona das donas, Sennor das sennores.
Rosa de beldad' e de parecer
E Fror d'alegria e de prazer,
Dona en mui piadosa seer,
Sennor en toller coitas e doores. (1959–1964: 33, ll.2–7)

[Rose of roses and flower of flowers,
Lady of ladies and noble of noblewomen.
Rose of beauty and form
and flower of joy and pleasure
Lady, in your merciful ways,
Noblewoman, removing trials and tribulations.]

Like Juan Ruiz, Alfonso points to the way the Virgin is able to act as a medicine for those in pain and suffering. Alfonso addresses her as a rose and also as a flower. In the third stanza, the rose and flower reoccur in combination. Commenting on Juan de Mena's reworking of 'rosas e flores' as 'plantas e rosas', Lida de Malkiel comments that 'están en nombre de todo lo más delicado de la naturaleza, que parecen tener lo arbitrario como esencia de su gracia' [stand for all the most delicate things in nature, which seem to have an arbitrary element as the essence of their grace] (1984: 223). Alfonso's use of 'rosa' and 'flor' together have been seen as capturing the essence of the category of flower, of which rose is the most perfect example. Their frequent

appearance as two separate categories in Latin lyric has been studied by Spitzer (1950: 139, 145). Flower could also be used for *fleur de lys*, or lily. Alfonso provides further evidence of the association of the Virgin with roses, including in his collection the miracle of a nobleman who always placed a garland of roses before her statue. In the context of this miracle, he addresses the Virgin 'mas bela que nula flor' [more beautiful than any flower] (1959–1964: II, 59, II.46).

The superlative mode of address for the Virgin is still current in the fourteenth century, when Pero López de Áyala addresses the Virgin in a reworking of the double flower image of rose of roses and flower of flowers from Alfonso's *Cantiga*:

> Santa María Virgen, Señora muy gloriosa,
> de las flores Tú flor, de las rosas Tú rosa.
> Rescibe estos viersos, Señora piadosa,
> del siervo que padesce pena muy peligrosa (1978: 288, ll.767a–d).
>
> [Holy Virgin Mary, most glorious lady,
> of the flowers you are flower, and of roses you are rose,
> receive these verses, merciful lady,
> from your servant who is suffering mortal pain.]

One final example of superlatives of praise to the Virgin is in a *cantica de loores* [canticle of praises] by Juan Ruiz. He calls the Virgin both 'flor de las flores' [flower of all flowers] (l.1678b) and 'mejor de las mejores' [best of all the best]:

> Quiero seguir a ti, flor de las flores,
> siempre dezir
> cantar de tus loores;
> non me partir
> de te servir
> mejor de las mejores. (1995: 439, ll.1678a–f)
>
> [I want to follow you, flower of all flowers,
> and ever to sing
> a song of your praises
> never to stop
> serving you,
> best of all the best.]

As in the case of López de Áyala, Juan Ruiz's emphasis is on service. His desire is to follow, serve, and sing her praises. Ruiz's sentiments show the way love for the Virgin and love for any medieval lady coincide. His sentiments would not be out of place in a poem of *fins amours*.

Poets use the rose image in praise of the Virgin but it is not as widespread as might be imagined. In Provençal troubadour lyric, as in Alfonso's *Cantigas*, 'flor' is found far more frequently than 'rosa', probably because poets are evoking the Song of Songs and, like it, use 'flor'. One of the best-known examples is from Aimeric de Bellenoi's poem 'Domna flor':

> Domna flor,
> [Frug] d'amor,
> Domna senz vilania. (Oroz Arizcuren 1972: 42)
>
> [Lady, flower,
> fruit of love,
> Lady, without any baseness.]

Bellenoi's beautiful evocation of the lady in 'Domna flor' is paralleled by his combining 'Domna' again with 'sin vileza' [without baseness]. Flower and fruit with their evocation of procreation are associated in much of Provençal lyric.

Rose, flowering, and fruiting are combined in Peire de Corbian's 'Dels angils rehina' [Queen of angels] where Corbian applies two biblical prefigurations to the Virgin:

> Dompna, roza ses espina,
> Sobre totas flors olens
> Vergua seca frug fazens. (Oroz Arizcuren 1972: 370, ll.9–11)
>
> [Lady, rose without thorn,
> more sweet-smelling than any flower
> dry branch giving fruit.]

Corbian, like many of the Spanish poets, categorizes the rose without thorn as a flower superior to all others. He particularly emphasizes its perfume. The association of flower and fruit is in Corbian's poem anchored to biblical prefigurations, the 'rosa ses espina' and the fruiting root of Jesse. These two prefigurations of the Virgin are found in close succession in most Castilian Conception liturgies, particularly those from Burgo de Osma and Segovia, and whilst I do not wish to suggest that the Provençal troubadour was intending to be immaculist when he combined the fruiting of the rod or root of Jesse with the flowering rose, nor even less that he knew Castilian liturgy, it is certainly likely that the combination of the two was suggested to the poet by liturgy and that it is found in other Marian liturgies in a similar sequence.

The Virgin Mary and the Rose in Late Medieval Religious Poetry

The rose's meaning, when it is applied to the Virgin, remains constant in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It can signal perfect beauty. For the author of 'Rosa de grant fermosura' [Rose of great beauty] (ID 1470), who could be one of two poets, fray Lope del Monte or Pedro González de Úceda (Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 618), the Virgin's beauty has its roots in her singularity. She is a chosen and selected bloom: 'muy cumplida de beldat […] escogida creatura' [her beauty is flawless, chosen creature] (618, ll.1–2, 4).

For Villasandino, the rose enshrines the both the concept of Mary's genealogy and of her beauty. She is 'Noble rosa, fija e esposa' [noble rose, daughter and spouse] (ID1147) (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 12, l.25). The combination of rose with 'fija' or 'esposa' underlines that Mary's different relationships with God marked her as special. The 'noble rosa' signals her origins as descendant of kings. The rose places her heritage at the centre of the poem, recalling that she was from the Old Law. Villasandino wants to emphasize links to the Song of Songs, both through the rose, and through 'esposa', its beautiful bride. For Santillana, the rose signifies beauty but also genealogy. In his 'De amor & temor' [Of love and fear] (ID0050), a lengthy debate poem between the narrative persona, el Marqués, supposedly the author of the poem, the Marqués of Santillana, and el Dotor, which combines proverbs in prose with lyric, Santillana addresses a number of qualities, both Christian and Stoic: wisdom, prudence, justice, honour, chasteness, strength of character, and openness, continence, truth, old age, and death. Under the category of honour, he discusses the concept of the honest woman and within this category he includes one stanza dedicated to the Virgin. Santillana does not intend to denigrate women, and finds many positive examples of their honesty. Santillana addresses Mary as rose and as 'fija de Dios e su esposa' [daughter of God and bride], thus reinforcing familial relationships:

> Ca dexando aquella rrosa
> Que proçede
> & bien como rrayo eçede
> vigurosa,
> fija de Dios & su esposa
> verdadera,
> de la vmanidad lunbrera
> rradiosa. (in Severin 2000: 95, ll.1–8)

[for leaving that rose
which comes forth
and even as a ray of light shines forth
with vigour,
daughter of God and true
bride,
of humanity radiant
bright light.]

Santillana combines the rose with light imagery and, in this, he is probably seeking inspiration in many Castilian liturgies, which, as has been explored above, also combine the two.

The association between Mary and the rose is part of another of Villasandino's religious lyrics (ID1148 D1147), where she is 'Rosa en Gerico plantada' [rose, planted in Jericho] (13, l.19). The prefiguration of the Virgin by the rose of Jericho has several functions. First, it emphasizes that she was from the Old Law both through the plant but also through the association of Jericho and Jewishness. Second, this rose is one of the attributes of Wisdom. It follows shortly after one of the descriptions of Wisdom's creation in Ecclesiasticus 24.9 and thus draws together creation allusions and female attributes since she is described using a range of flowers and spices. Villasandino's poem evokes them in connection with Mary and it brings the suggestion of a more sensual note, that of perfume, and thus of sanctity.[5]

Poets associate the rose with sinlessness. The bush is thorny and, because of the nature of the thorns, it can represent carnal knowledge, which is a key element of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. When Soria, a *cancionero* poet about whom no biographical detail is known, describes the Virgin as rose without thorn in his 'Coplas a la assumtion de la Virgen' [Verses for the Assumption of the Virgin] (ID 6068), he is indicating that she is the perfect one, untouched by the pricking of sin:

Rico estandarte y bandera
donde miran los xp*ist*ianos
infierno de los paganos
del parayso escalera
pues le tienes en tus manos.
Rosa sin ninguna espina
comiençio y fin de virtud
libro de santa doctrina

[5] I have made an initial study of Roig's use of perfume in 'On the Scent of Mary: The Power of Perfume', forthcoming in a volume of essays in honour of David Viera.

de los males medicina
despues eterna salud (1990–1991: V, 149, ll.11–20)

[Rich standard and pennant
where the Christians can look
hell of the unbeliever
ladder of paradise
since you hold it in your hands
Rose without any thorn
beginning and end of virtue
book of holy doctrine
and medicine for sickness
then eternal salvation.]

The poem consists of a litany of epithets emphasizing different aspects of the Virgin's nature. She is Jacob's ladder, linking heaven and earth, from the vision granted to the sleeping Jacob (Genesis 28.12). She is medicine to cure the sins of believers. She is a book of doctrine, a metaphor which emphasizes her role as a guide for sinners. For Soria, she is also the rose without thorn. He does not point to her genealogy through his use of the rose but rather to her sinlessness and his interpretation is enhanced by the way he adds an additional nuance, for it becomes a rose without any thorn. His use of 'ninguna' underscores his alliance of thorns and sins but does not specify whether the sin he evokes is mortal, venial, or original, and the poem gives no definite clues as to how to interpret 'espina'. He may intend to link two concepts of perfection at the heart of the stanza: rose and the image of perfection in 'comiençio y fin' [beginning and end], Alpha and Omega. The beginning and end is an attribute of divinity (Revelation 1.8) but the rose also is the perfect flower, the attainment of perfect Wisdom (Wilkins 1969: 113). It is possible, however, that when Soria writes 'comiençio' he may intend an oblique reference to Mary's creation at the beginning of time (see Chapter 8). I will return to Soria's *coplas* in the second part of the chapter.

A number of lyric poems are present in the *cancioneros* where a sacred interpretation is possible. These are often thought to be remodelled *a lo divino*.[6] One enigmatic lyric about a rose bush contains a series of referents which could be either natural or biblical:

[6] Dronke (1979: 243) discusses how medieval poets exploit both sexual and sacred connotations. He emphasizes the enigma this leaves for critical interpretation.

Del rosal sale la rosa
… qué color saca tan fino!
Aunque nace del espino,
nac' entera y olorosa.
nace de nuevo primor
esta flor.
huele tanto desde el suelo
que penetra hasta el cielo
su fuerza maravillosa. (1992: 49)

[From the rose bush springs the rose
what a beautiful delicate colour it has!
Though it is borne on the thorn,
it blooms full and perfumed.
This flower is born of a new beauty
Its scent from earth is so sweet
that its strong perfume
pierces heaven.]

Several elements in the lyric could make it applicable to the Virgin. First the use of the rose and the emphasis on the thorn-bush from which it sprang, could be used to differentiate the Virgin from her ancestry in the same way that Soria did. Next, the poet emphasizes the scent of the flower to reflect its wholeness and perfection: 'nac' entera y olorosa' [it blooms full and perfumed], two attributes frequently applied to Mary and to her sinless birth. Finally, he creates a relationship between earth and heaven in 'penetra hasta el cielo' [pierces heaven, or pierces as far as heaven], which evokes the love felt by God the Father for his bride. The sentiments echo those found in the Song of Songs if it is given a Marian interpretation.

Villancicos a lo divino are common in the *cancioneros* and many established Court poets wrote them. One of them by Juan Álvarez Gato (c.1430–1510), majordomo to Isabel la Católica, is dedicated to Christ's Nativity (ID3153). It is not so enigmatic as 'del rosal sale la rosa' because Álvarez Gato mentions Bethlehem and the 'portalejo' [stable]:

venida es venida
al mundo la vida

[…] naçido ha en belen
el ques n*uest*ro bien

venido es en quien
por el fue escojida
en vn portalejo
con pobre aparejo
seruido dun viejo
su guarda escogida
la piedra preciosa
ni la fresca Rosa
no es tan hermosa
como la parida
Venida es venida
al mundo la vida (ll.1–20)

[Come, life has come
to the world
Born in Bethlehem
he who is our good
comes in the one
who was chosen by him
in a stall
with poor trappings
served by an old man
chosen as her support
neither the precious stone
nor the fresh rose
is so beautiful
as the Virgin Mother.
come, life has come
to the world]

Although the main theme in Álvarez Gato's *villancico* is the birth of Christ, he addresses the theme of grace and Mary's mediation of it through her motherhood. It is after he has evoked the descent of grace on earth in the first stanza, 'venida es al suelo / la graçia del çielo' [Grace of heaven / has come to the earth] and described the nativity scene, the poor stable with the stall, in the second, that he turns his attention to the Virgin's nature. To do so, he compares her to two different elements, vegetable and mineral. The first is represented by the freshly opened rose with its transient beauty and the second by the precious stone with its durability and its importance as an item of value. Neither is her equal in beauty after delivery of the Christ child (Spitzer 1950). It is significant that both precious stones and flowers are part of the *corona*, a meditation on the Virgin's attributes, which was used for devotion in the period in Spain. Álvarez Gato's poetry has been the subject of a study by Márquez Villanueva (1960).

By the end of the medieval period, the rose was also likely to symbolize the new devotion to the rosary. Despite popular belief that St Dominic introduced the rosary, historical evidence indicates that it was a member of the Dominican Order, Alain de la Roche, who attributed it to Dominic. Although telling of prayers and the Marian psalter had existed for many years, their fusion and crystallization as the rosary occurred in the 1470s and rosary confraternities began to spring up from 1475 onwards (Ellington 2001: 33–34). The earliest depictions of the Madonna of the Rosary appear in the same decade (Wilkins 1969: 37–41, 187; Stratton 1994: 124). Tallante makes explicit the relationship between the devotion and the rose as a praise of the Virgin in his 'Una suplicacion a Nuestra Señora del roser hecha por el mismo' [A Supplication to Our Lady of the Rosary Written by Tallante] (ID6049), which is found in the *Cancionero General*. To fit with his dedication, Tallante calls the Virgin 'flor primera del rosal' [first flower on the rose bush] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 120, l.15). Tallante's meditation on the rosary is a piece of poetic propaganda for it.

Catalan Poetry: The Rose

Catalan poets often explicitly echo biblical prefigurations of Mary as both the rose and the rose bush. Most of the references to Mary as rose are not, however, from the *certamen* dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. In that *certamen* the rose is used three times in poems by Narcís Vinyoles, de Cors, and Bosch. Vinyoles's Italian poem begins, as described earlier, by arguing the case in favour of the Immaculate Conception from a range of positions. He then makes his association between the rose and the Song of Songs evident by addressing the Virgin as 'immaculata rosa', immediately after emphasizing her relationship with God the Father and God the Son: 'da Dio dilecta esposa / esposa da Figlio e figiola del Patre' (496, ll.71–73). De Cors too, in his winning poem for the ruby prize, rhymes 'rosa' and 'esposa' (463, ll.61–64).

In the 1474 *certamen*, poets prefigure Mary by the rose on six occasions. The rose evokes a lovers' bower, echoing the one in the Song of Songs (1.16) to allegorize the relationship between Mary and Christ. Castellví employs it in each of his entries. In his Castilian one, he develops the image of the lovers in the first stanza, presenting the Lover taking his ease on the breast of his Beloved: 'Del muy Sober-

ano espijada rosa / en quien el Eterno se huelga e reposa' [Of the most high Sovereign, rose in full bloom / on whom the Eternal One takes his ease and rests] (260, l.3). Mary is the full-blown rose, which provides a resting-place on its petals. He refers to the Virgin as 'Del gran Redemptor madre hi esposa' [of the great Redeemer, mother and bride] (259, l.1). His appropriation of Song of Songs imagery shows how the rose, equivalent to the bride of the first line, is closely associated with the divine. The resting Lover from Song of Songs (1.13, 2.6) becomes archetypical of mystical experience in Hispanic poetry in the Golden Age.[7] His poem does not have the same mystic or sensual power as St John of the Cross's poem but, nevertheless, it serves as an example of how Song of Songs imagery developed in the centuries preceding Spain's Golden Age. Song of Songs description of the Beloved reclining on the breast of the Lover is traced in its usage by patristic writers by Terence O'Reilly (1995a: XV, 9).

The rose can also be used as part of an evocation of the garden of Paradise as in Castellví's Catalan entry. O'Reilly provides an important study of the paradise garden in pre-Golden Age writing, both biblical and patristic (1995b). Castellví addresses the Virgin as 'flor sempre bella' [ever beautiful flower], then as 'rama' [branch] of the Tree of Life (259, l.4, l.9). In the next stanza she is 'flor de llis' [lily] and 'reflagant rosa' [perfumed rose]. Castellví's description of the Virgin amid 'monts florits de rama' with the moon at her feet, not only evokes the Woman of Revelation 12.1 but also suggests that Castellví is visualizing one of the floats in the procession of the Virgin (see also Chapter 6). Castellví's poem does not include any direct defence of the Immaculate Conception, although amid his litany of praise to the Virgin are many biblical prefigurations which might suggest it. Jordi Centelles's entry, on the other hand, begins the first stanza with an overt defence of

[7] John of the Cross draws on the same image as Castellví in his *cantica*:

> En mi pecho florido,
> que entero para él solo se guardaba,
> allí quedó dormido,
> y yo le regalaba,
> y el ventalle de cedros aire daba. (1991: 43)
>
> [On my blossoming breast
> which was wholly reserved for him,
> there he rested asleep
> and I regaled him
> and the soft breeze from the cedars wafted over.]

the Conception: 'Cambra del Fil, El vos póc preservar / taca no us fés peccat original' [Chamber of the Son, He could preserve you, and original sin made no stain in you]. Immediately after this declaration of support for the Conception doctrine, Centelles addresses Mary as 'Mena de flors, incomperable rosa' [vein of flowers, incomparable rose] (251, ll.8–9, 10).

Many of the *certamen* poets favour litanies of praises to the Virgin, and Jaume Gaçull is no exception. Like some of the Castilian poets, he refers to her as a fountain brimming with salvation, as a closed aumbrey, as door of Paradise, a castle with unbreachable defences, and a beautiful palace. Among the litany of biblical prefigurations and religious objects, Gaçull includes two invocations of Mary with floral images: 'flor de les flors' [flower of flowers] and 'pura com rosa' [pure as a rose] (318, ll.24, 42). These images of the Virgin, many of them biblical are often found in connection with a verse from the Song of Songs, 'you are wholly beautiful' (4.7)

The Tota pulchra es and Mary's Beauty

The Song and its different interpretations inspired many medieval commentaries, both exegetical and mystical (Matter 1990: 52–150). Within it, *Tota pulchra es* [you are wholly beautiful] was of particular inspiration to artists in their desire to depict the Immaculate Conception. Commentarists, like Alain de L'Isle, and mystics, like St Bernard, applied the Song's nuptial imagery to the Virgin. De L'Isle is typical of medieval theologians in relating the Song of Songs both to Mary and to the Church:

> Unde cum canticum amoris, scilicet epithalamium Salomonis, specialiter et spiritualiter ad Ecclesiam referatur, tamen specialissime et spiritualissime ad gloriosam Virginem reducitur quod divino nutu (prout poterimus) explicabimus. Gloriose igitur Virgo sponsi optans praesentiam, desiderans gloriosam conceptionem ab angelo nuntiatam, affectans divinam Incarnationem, ait sic: 'Osculetur me osculo oris sui'. (PL 210: 71B)
>
> [Thus, although the song of love, that is, the wedding hymn of Solomon, specially and spiritually refers in particular to the Church, nevertheless, it relates most specially and spiritually to the Virgin, as we will explain (insofar as we can) by divine command. Therefore, the glorious Virgin, hoping for the presence of the spouse, desiring the glorious conception announced by the angel, striving for the divine Incarnation, says: 'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth'.]

Medieval theologians consider that Mary's beauty was a physical representation of her relationship to God. Although St Bernard was totally opposed to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, his association of the imagery of the Song of Songs and Mary inspired others to associate it with the new doctrine. Artists created a compilation of scriptural verses, known as the *Tota pulchra es*, because its central feature was a depiction of the Virgin, sometimes crowned with stars and standing on an upturned moon, labelled with the verse. It was probably developed at the very end of the fifteenth century, although the earliest examples of it date from the first decade of the sixteenth:

> The Virgin stands in the center, upon the clouds, between heaven and earth. […] Symbols taken from Sacred Scripture are arranged round about her or arranged one above the other. An inscription taken from the Canticle of Canticles (4: 7) specifies the doctrinal sense of the composition: *Tota pulchra es amica mea et macula non est in te*. Hence the title given to this theme, which incidentally, borrows some of its symbols also from Solomon's poem. (Vloberg 1958: 476)[8]

Two miniatures, from the *Heures de la Vierge à l'usage de Rome*, printed in Paris in 1503, together with one from the *Heures de la Vierge à l'usage de Rouen*, printed in Paris in the same year, are the earliest examples (Vloberg 1958: 478, n.44). Stratton mentions two Hispanic examples of it on altar-frontals, one in Seville, the other in Carmona, both dating from the mid-sixteenth century (1994: 24). Valencia Cathedral museum also holds a *Tota pulchra es* dating from the 1520s. The rose or rose-garden shifted in their association from feminine perfection and beauty to a definite role in prefiguring the immaculate nature of the Virgin in association with other symbols.

It is Ecclesiasticus, one of the Wisdom books, which describes the female semi-deity, Wisdom, as 'quasi plantatio rosae in Jericho' [like a

[8] The fifteen symbols traditionally associated with the *Tota pulchra es* are the sun and the moon (Song of Songs 6.2), the star (Revelation 22.16), the cedar of Lebanon (Ezekiel 17.22 and Ecclesiasticus 24.13), the rose-garden of Jericho and the olive tree (Ecclesiasticus 24.14; 24.19), the rod of Jesse (Ezekiel 7.10), the gate of heaven (Genesis 28.17), the tower of David, the garden enclosed, the fountain of the gardens, the well of living waters, the lily among thorns (Song of Songs 4.4; 4.12–13; 2.1), and the unblemished mirror (Wisdom 7.26). Each of the symbols is associated with particular biblical verses (476, n.39). In a note on Plate XI, which represents a Bayeux altarpiece from the seventeenth century, Vloberg lists some additional symbols, the tree of life, Jacob's ladder (Gen. 28.12), Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6), and Gideon's fleece (Judges 6.38), which were later incorporated. Stratton includes the city of God (Ps. 87.3). The rose is present in the form of the rose-garden. Stratton mistakenly cites the rose in Song of Songs 4.4, rather than 2.1 (1994: 42).

rose plantation in Jericho] (24.14). Wilkins characterizes the female figure, represented by the attributes of Wisdom, as the 'timeless lady, the feminine principle in divinity, in the old book that is plundered to glorify the Queen in the solemnity of the rose-garden, says not only that she was there before the beginning of time (see Chapter 8) but also that she grows to her full height like the rose-trees or rose-gardens of Jericho' (1969: 112). Within the concept of fullness of height is encapsulated the sense of perfection that characterizes the rose. Wilkins does not address whether watering, which could through allegory be the grace outpoured on the Virgin, contributed to its perfect nature. She does discuss the image of dew on the rose, although not in connection with interpreting Ecclesiasticus. She cites from a book of early sixteenth-century sermons, and points out that Mary's spiritual reception of Christ is associated with the rose and the morning dew: 'And as in the morning the rose opens, receiving the dew from heaven and the sun, so Mary's soul did open and receive Christ, the heavenly dew' (Cornelius van Sneek, *Sermones XXI super Confraternitate de Rosaceo*, Paris 1514, cited at 1969: 113). The association of rose imagery and the rosary is explored in its different manifestations by Wilkins (1969). The dew-fall also suggests a cross-reference to another biblical prefiguration of Mary: the dew which fell on Gideon's fleece (Judges 6.36). The rose and the way it receives water outpoured to refresh it makes the prefiguration particularly apt to describe Mary's Immaculate Conception.

The *Tota pulchra es* may also have existed in poetic versions, although this has never previously been established. Fifteenth-century poetry records several references to those symbols which would later be associated in early representations of it in art. Some poets combine symbols with citation of the verse.

The best example is the anonymous poet of the 1474 *certamen*, who uses the Latin verse *Tota pulchra es* and also incorporates a few of the symbols traditionally associated with it. His stanzas combine a number of different Latin quotations, as well as a Marian litany, drawn from hymns such as the *Ave Regina coelorum* and the *Ave maris stella*, and in the midst of them is embedded '*Tota es pulchra, amica mea*' (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 312, l.35). This means it is not obvious whether he intends to create an early literary *Tota pulchra es* or whether the combination is fortuitous.

The first of the symbols occurs at the end of the first stanza: 'Madre de los peccadores, / floresca, flor de las flores, / "*sicut lilium inter spinas*"' [Mother of sinners, flourish, flower of flowers, like the lily among

thorns] (312, l.18). The anonymous poet includes the floral superlative to demonstrate the Virgin's excellence, a regular feature of Hispanic Marian poetry. The lily among thorns (Song of Songs 2.1), one of the flower images applied to the Beloved, is the first antiphon at vespers in Nogarolis's Conception office: 'Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias Ade' [Just as the lily among thorns is my lover among the daughters of Adam]. Although the unknown poet's work predates Nogarolis's office, its presence shows how closely it was associated with the Conception by the 1470s.

Within his litany of epithets, the anonymous poet refers to the rod of Jesse, another of the symbols found in the *Tota pulchra es*: 'Esta es de quien l·Esglesia / translada de la ley / "*floruit virga Jesse*" ' [She is the one of whom the Church transfers from the Old Testament, the branch of Jesse flowered] (ll.23–25). The tree or root of Jesse was an emblem for twelfth-century representations of the conception of Christ and the shift to immaculist overtones was a gradual process (Stratton 1994: 13).[9] Berceo associates the branch of Jesse with the Virgin in the *Loores*:

> En ti ·s cumplió, Sennora, el dicho d'Isaía,
> que de radiz de Yesse una verga saldría,
> e flor que non fue vista dend se levantaría,
> spíritu con siet dones en la flor posaría.
>
> Madre tu fust la verga, el tu fijo la flor,
> que reviscla los muertos con süave olor; (1975: 74, 8a–9d)
>
> [In you, Lady, was accomplished the saying of Isaiah,
> that, from the root of Jesse, a branch would issue,
> and a flower whence it sprang was unseen,
> the seven-gifted spirit would alight on that flower.
>
> Mother, you were the branch and your Son the flower,
> which revives the dead with sweet perfume;]

He employs Jesse's rod as a symbol of the genealogy of the Virgin. His words echo two occasions on which the prefiguration appears in different liturgies. The first is from one of the responses in the liturgy for the feast-day of St Anne:

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[9] She records a sixteenth-century example in Seville Cathedral (1994: 18). The Virgin's parents kneel before the Virgin. Stems spring from each of their hearts, forming a pedestal on which the Virgin stands. The immaculist intention of the artist is confirmed by the inscription: 'Pulchra es, amica mea, et macula originalis non est in te' [You are beautiful, my love, and the original blemish is not in you].

R / Inclita stirps iesse produxit amenam de qua processit flos nato plenus odore
V / Est hec uirga dei mater flor ortus ab illa.[10]

[R / The excellent rod of Jesse produced a sweet branch from which there issued a flower full of perfume.
V / The Mother of God is the branch and the flower sprang from her.]

The same allusion reappears in a version even closer to Berceo's. It is in the liturgy of the Nativity of the Virgin where it is one of the responses at third night prayer, following the homily or final reading:

V / Stirps Iesse virgam produxit virgaque florem
P / et super hunc florem requiescit spiritus almus
V / Virgo dei genetrix virga est flos filius eius.

[V / The rod of Jesse produced a branch and the branch a flower
P / And on that flower alighted the gentle spirit.
V / The Virgin mother of God is the branch and her son the flower.][11]

In the Urgell breviary, the response is found at third night prayer in the liturgy of St Anne, which shares many features with that of the Nativity.[12] A hymn to the seven-form spirit follows the response (AEV 81) and may have inspired Berceo's reference to the 'siet dones' [seven gifts]. The breviaries' and Berceo's use of the rod of Jesse is both christological and mariological but neither begins to point to the Immaculate Conception. It is, however, possible that the unknown Castilian poet writing for the 1474 *certamen* intended his reference to Jesse's rod to be read in an immaculist sense and as part of the *Tota pulchra es*. It is not my purpose to match Berceo's biblical imagery to that of the psalms or antiphons but this one example provides a powerful indicator of the way in which clerics, like Berceo, and lay people, used monastic prayers to 'sanctify their day'. Benedicta Ward's comments on St Anselm and the way daily usage caused him to imbibe the liturgy (Anselm 1973: 36) can equally be applied to Berceo.

Into his laudatory evocation of the Virgin's attributes in the *Milagros*, Berceo incorporates another litany. This time he includes the star of the morning (Revelation 22.16), Gideon's fleece (Judges 6.38–39), the sealed fountain (Song of Songs 4.12), and the closed door (Ezekiel 44.2):

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[10] *Breviarium secundum consuetudinem ecclesiae vicensis* (AEV 81), fol. 323^{v}; *Breviario de Huesca* (ACH 13), fol. 498^{v}.

[11] *Breviarium secundum usum ecclesiae barcinonensis* (AEV 83), fol. 416^{v}, *Breviarium de officio totius anni secundum consuetudinem ecclesiae vicensis* (AEV 86), fol. 214^{v}.

[12] *Breviarium urgellense* (ACSU 147), p. 352^{v}.

La benedicta Virgen es estrella clamada,
estrella de los mares, guïona deseada,
[…] Es clamada y éslo, de los cielos reína,
tiemplo de Jesu Christo, estrella matutina,
[…] Ella es vellocino qe fue de Gedeón,
en qui vino la pluvia, una grand visïón;
[…]
Ella es dicha fuent de qui todos bevemos,
[…] Ella es dicha puerto a qui todos corremos,
e la puerta por la qual entrada atendemos.
Ella es dicha puerta en sí bien encerrada. (1980: 33, ll.32a; 33a; 34a; 35a; 35c)

[The blessed Virgin is called star,
star of the seas, desired guiding light
(…) she is called and she is, of the heavens, queen,
temple of Jesus Christ, star of the morning,
she is the fleece which was Gideon's
on which the rain fell, a mighty vision.
She is the fountain from which we all drink,
(…) She is that port to which we all hasten
and the gate through which we wait to enter.
She is that gate, firmly locked.]

Berceo's *Milagros* litany again mentions several elements, the star and the fountain, which three centuries later were to surround the *Tota pulchra es*, showing that random association of such a litany cannot be ruled out. His litany is constructed around his exposé of the Virgin's unblemished virginity (31, l.20b). How Berceo constructs his litany and the longevity of these prefigurations of the Virgin urge caution when similar litanies are used by poets in the fifteenth century.

The existence of a fifteenth-century *Tota pulchra es* is, nevertheless, reinforced by further evidence. The Castilian includes a biblical quotation for a second symbol traditionally included in the *Tota pulchra es*: '*et quasi mirra electa / sicut cedrum Lebani*' [like myrrh elect, like a cedar of Lebanon] (ll.29–30).[13] The Song of Songs brims with references to cedars and to Lebanon, and Ecclesiasticus 24.13 contains the term 'sicut cedrum exaltata' [I have grown tall like a cedar]. In a note on the poem, Ferrando Francés gives the source of 'nombroses expresiones i cites' [numerous expressions and quotations] as 'preses de Càntic dels

[13] The quotation cannot be directly attributed to the Song of Songs but its use could imply it. The Song of Songs contains the highest number of references to myrrh from a single book in the whole Bible, with seven references out of a total of sixteen (Cruden 1980: 447).

Càntics i del Llibre de la Saviesa' [taken from the Song of Songs and the Book of Wisdom] (1983: 313). Unfortunately, Ferrando Francés was misled by the closeness of this line to the sources he mentions. *Sicut cedrum Lebani* [like a cedar of Lebanon] is taken from Psalm 92.12. Given that the reference to the 'virga Jesse' occurs in the same stanza, there is evidence that the Castilian poet may be building a *Tota pulchra es*.

This supposition is strengthened when the final stanza is examined. It consists of 'diverses invocacions preses de la lletania mariana' [different invocations taken from the Marian litany] (313, n.45–50). The Castilian includes '*Ave stella matutina*' [Hail, morning star] (Ecclesiasticus 50.6–7) amidst other titles and antiphons. The star, 'stella maris', was thought to have been originally a copyist error for 'stilla maris' (Warner 1976: 262) but it was associated also with the *Tota pulchra es* and I have made an initial evaluation of how it began to transfer to immaculist contexts through association with the liturgy of the Immaculate Conception (Twomey 2005). The Castilian's reference to the cedar of Lebanon, the branch of Jesse, the *lilium inter spinas*, and the *stella matutina*, four of the symbols commonly found surrounding the *Tota pulchra es*, could be creating a rare partial construction of one in literature, especially since all appear in conjunction with the verse. The inference is compelling, given the conjunction of four elements as well as the quotation of the principal verse, even though the poem is dated some twenty years before the first *Tota pulchra es* in art.

It is possible, however, that the four elements of the *Tota pulchra es* are unconnected. The symbols are not systematically associated but are scattered throughout the verses. The poet may have intended no more than for the symbols to intensify the biblical referencing of beauty in the poem. More to the point, similar litanies are used in many laudatory Marian poems. For example, Berceo included one in his *Milagros* and in the *Loores*, as indicated previously, and he did not intend to construct a *Tota pulchra es* with either.

There is further evidence, although less complete, that some *certamen* poets cite the verse *Tota pulchra es* and associate it with the traditional emblems of the Virgin which surround it in art. Blay Assencí, a priest from Segorbe, alludes to one of the *Tota pulchra es* images, the *fons hortorum*, the sealed fountain from Song of Songs 4.15. He has already incorporated several references to the beauty of the Virgin in his poem and his third stanza develops the image of the Virgin as the Beloved:

¿Qual és, ni fon, ni serà tan amable
de l'Increat com vós, amada sposa?
Si ·n algun temps peccat vos féu culpable
fóreu en hoy a Déu, mas detestable
és lo pensar que res vos faça nosa. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 529, ll.25–29)

[What is, or was, or will be so lovely
to the Uncreated One as you, beloved spouse?
If at any time sin made you blameworthy
you would be so today to God
but it is detestable to think that anything made you obnoxious.]

The rhyme scheme unites 'amable', 'culpable', and 'detestable', opposing the real relationship of the Virgin with God, expressed in 'amable', with the shocking thought that she might have been tainted by original sin and have become separated from Him. The postulated relationship is expressed in 'nosa' [obnoxious].

He then incorporates the mirror, the *speculum sine macula* from the eulogy to Wisdom in Wisdom 7.26, among his epithets for the Virgin, another potential immaculist symbol. The seventh stanza of Assencí's poem refers fleetingly to the 'espill e lum de resplandor eterna' [mirror and light of eternal splendour]. Assencí, does not focus on the idea of stainlessness but it is clear he is referring to the mirror from Wisdom, when he mentions the author of Wisdom literature, 'Salamó' (531, ll.83–84). Three symbols from the *Tota pulchra es* are present in Assencí's poem but their association is not conclusive.

Baltasar Joan Balaguer, a monk at the Cistercian monastery of Our Lady of Valldigna, Master in Holy Theology and in Medicine, submitted two entries, one to win the marzipan prize in the competition and the other to the sailing map prize. He also wrote a prose entry for a competition in Latin in praise of the purity of the Virgin. A number of other devotional works by Balaguer were copied in the same manuscript, held in the monastery archives. In his poem for the marzipan prize, he incorporates a litany of Old Testament symbols. Some elements of it, like Gideon's fleece and Jacob's ladder, were only associated with the *Tota pulchra es* by the seventeenth century (Vloberg 1958: plates X, XI). Balaguer's reason for using the litany is as an illustration of the way in which God's actions can supersede any human concept of what is possible:

Lo bon Senyor en diverses figures
ha demostrat l'obra de gran fayço:

de Gedeon, ple de ros lo velló,
de Moysés e moltes escriptures,
verga d'Aron, del sanctuari, archa,
escala gran de Jacob luytador,
libre tanquat, sagellat del Monarcha,
manna del cel d'especial sabor,
jardí plasent als invocants no cara,
procuradiu, impetratriu encara. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 504–505, ll.27–36).

[The good Lord in many figures
has demonstrated work of high creation:
Gideon's fleece, full of dew,
of Moses and many writings,
rod of Aaron, ark of the sanctuary,
great ladder of wrestling Jacob,
closed book, sealed by the King,
manna of heaven of special taste,
pleasant garden, available freely to supplicants,
treasurer and dear empress.]

Balaguer includes the sealed book and the pleasant garden among the figures in his litany. The enclosed garden was regularly associated with the *Tota pulchra es* in the early sixteenth century, although the sealed book was not. The other symbols included in Balaguer's litany were never part of it. There is no quotation of the verse *Tota pulchra es* in the poem.

A final example will provide evidence of how the *Tota pulchra es* may have been embedded in immaculist literature by the middle of the fifteenth century. The object of Roig's narrative poem, as set out in its prologue, is an attack on ladies and praise of the immaculate Virgin: 'dones blasona, lo llir corona / spines, cards crema' [set out the noble heritage of women, crown the lily / thorns and thistles, burn] (1978: 24). The title of the poem, *Espill* can also be read as the mirror of Wisdom 7.6, a prefiguration of the Virgin's sinlessness, as well as the mirror in which the protagonist sees his faults. He has created a strong immaculist context from the outset for any prefigurations of the Virgin embedded within the poem. The 'Tema', which precedes the preface to the *Espill*, provides a second echo of the Song of Songs: '*Sicut lilium inter spina / sic amica mea inter filias*' (2.2) (1978: 24). Roig uses 'inmaculada' to describe the Virgin within the poem, glossing it as 'no mai tacada' (1978: 155). The section of the *Espill* where it occurs uses defence of the Immaculate Conception to allow him to praise the Virgin and denigrate other women. The term is linked by rhyme to the image of glass or pure crystal, associating it with an allusion to Wisdom 7.6:

'Més que mirall e pur cristall / inmaculada no mai tacada' [better than mirror and pure glass / immaculate and never stained] and also possibly to that of light passing through glass (see Chapter 6). The image of the mirror also follows a series of light images ('lluna' [moon]; 'stella' [star]; 'sol' [sun]), scent ('goma' [gum]), and bird ('voltor' [vulture]; 'coloma' [dove]; 'fènix' [phoenix]). He spills forth a laudatory sequence, in which the nouns and verbs recall each other through assonance. Amidst the symbols used in praise of the Virgin, 'lluent com lluna' [shining as the moon] and 'cintil·lant stel·la' [sparkling star] belong to the *Tota pulchra es*. He also clearly states the Virgin's uniqueness and her preservation from original sin by the action of God.

As with the anonymous *certamen* poem, the evidence can be read both ways. Roig's title, *Espill*, could be an ironic echo of *Speculum*. It was the title of many medieval histories, like that of Vincent de Beauvais. Many of the biblical symbols he uses, like the star, have a long history of being applied to the Virgin. *Ave maris stella*, a hymn, dates from the eighth or ninth century. Berceo reworks it as 'Ave Sancta María, estrella de la mar' (1975: 63, l.1a), whilst 'Estrela do dia' [daystar] is found in Alfonso's *Cantigas* (1959–1964: I, l.2).

There are, nevertheless, indications that Roig may have been deliberately setting together immaculist prefigurations of the Virgin. The title and the dedication of the narrative poem to the lily among thorns could provide a deliberate association between the two and may constitute an early association of symbols belonging to the *Tota pulchra es* to frame the text.

Tallante, an ardent defender of the Immaculate Conception, frequently uses *Tota pulchra es* symbolism. In his 'Esparsa suya a Nuestra Señora' [Verses to Our Lady] (ID 1003 S 1002), a short poem in praise of the Immaculate Conception, he includes only one of the *Tota pulchra es* symbols, the sealed fountain, but shows that it has been transferred away from association with the Virgin Birth to the Immaculate Conception. He follows it with a statement about Mary's sinlessness:

> Perenal fuente sellada,
> fuente de toda limpieza […]
> pues no te toca la cisma
> del pecado. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991, V, 129, ll.1–9)
>
> [Eternal sealed fountain,
> fount of all cleanliness (…),
> since you are untouched by the schism
> of sin.]

Tallante's association of sinlessness and the sealed fountain is not enough to consider it an example of a *Tota pulchra* es but it is evidence of how the symbols were beginning to transfer to the position in support of the Immaculate Conception, which they would occupy by the early sixteenth century. In another of his poems, he associates two *Tota pulchra es* symbols (ID 1004), the 'fuente limpia' and the 'clara estrella':

> Beato quien a ti cobra
> fuente limpia clara estrella
> de la gracia que a ti sobra
> para esta nuestra obra
> ayamos vna centella (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 121, ll.86–90)
>
> [Blessed he who acquires
> from you some of the grace which is overflowing
> unblemished fountain, clear star
> for this our task
> may we have a spark.]

Again the two symbols are allied to discussion of sin and the Virgin is judged not to have been touched by even the slightest mark of it. Further evidence of how the *Tota pulchra es* symbols were becoming recognizable signifiers of the Immaculate Conception can be drawn from Tallante's poem, 'Otra obra suya sobre la libertad de Nuestra Señora del pecado original' [Another of his poems on the freedom of Our Lady from Original Sin] (ID 6046), where he uses the star, the enclosed garden (Song of Songs 4.12), and the temple as part of a defence of the Immaculate Conception. Tallante's garden is allied with the creation of the Virgin: 'la hizo / restando clausura entera y encerrada' (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 118, ll.183–184). This time the rubric to the poem provides a macrocontext of immaculism for the whole poem.

Reworking popular lyric *a lo divino* was a technique employed by many in the *cancioneros*, as determined earlier, but the *villancico*, 'Yo me soy la morenica', is a striking example of the creation of a possible *Tota pulchra* es through the reworking of a traditional lyric about a dark-skinned girl. It cites the Song of Songs directly, choosing: '*Nigra sum sed Formosa*' [I am black but beautiful], probably, according to Pérez Priego, because the *villancico* could have been dedicated to the black Virgin of Montserrat. It also mentions the supposed author of the Song of Songs, Solomon: 'que salamón canta y glosa'. Having established a Song of Songs context, the lyric incorporates two prefigurations of the

Virgin's incorruptibility, the burning bush ('mata inflamada') and the rose without thorn ('sin espina rosa'):

> Yo me soy la morená
> Lo moreno, bien mirado,
> fue la culpa del pecado
> que en m'nunca fue hallado,
> ni jamás se hallará
>
> Soy la sin espina rosa,
> que salamón canta y glosa:
> *Nigra sum sed Formosa*,
> y por mí se cantará
>
> Yo soy la mata inflamada,
> ardiendo sin ser quemada
> ni de aquel fuego tocada
> que a las otras tocará. (Pérez Priego 1989: 131)
>
> [I am the little dark-skinned girl]
> I am the dark girl,
> darkness, carefully examined,
> was the result of sin,
> which was never found in me
> nor ever will be.
>
> I am the rose without thorn,
> of which Solomon sings and explains
> *Nigra sum sed Formosa*,
> and it is sung for me.
>
> I am the burning bush,
> burning without being consumed
> never touched by the fire
> which will harm the rest.]

Where poets cite the verse 'Tota pulchra es' and combine it with a number of the symbols surrounding it, there seems to be some likelihood of their intending to create a pictorial representation of the Immaculate Conception. De Cors combines symbols from the *Tota pulchra es* with quotation of the Song of Songs verse (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 464, l.92). He takes the rose bush as the starting point for a scholastic argument, combining postulation that, if nature permitted differentiation between the plant and the flower, then transfer between sinful lineage and sinlessness could be permitted in the case of the Virgin. The nature of rose allows him to argue that God was capable of doing more for the Virgin than for the rose. Whilst the rose blooms on

a thorny stem, the Virgin was kept free from sin and was taken by him as his Bride:

> Si del roser espinós naix la rosa,
> naturalment aquella sens espina,
> ¿quant més pot fer Déu que siau exclosa
> d'infectió, prenent-vos per esposa. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 463, ll.61–64)
>
> [If from the thorny rose bush springs the rose,
> by nature without thorn
> How much more can God do so that you might be excluded
> from infection, taking you as his Bride?]

De Cors models his structure on a Scotian premise: '¿quant més pot fer?' [How much more can God do?], combining it with an oblique reference to the Song of Songs in 'esposa'. The *endreça* [refrain] returns to the Song of Songs symbols. This time, he combines the lily and the vernacular rendering of *Tota pulchra es*: 'Lir net e pur, tota pulcra Maria' [Lily, clean and pure, wholly beautiful Mary] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 464, l.92). The rose, which suggests the *plantatio rosae* [rose-garden] (Ecclesiasticus 24.13) and also the 'lir net e pur', echoing the *lilium inter spinas* [lily among thorns] (Song of Songs 2.2) are both symbols later associated with the *Tota pulchra es*. De Cors sets them all within an immaculist context and this may indicate he was constructing a *Tota pulchra es*.

However, whilst prototype *Tota pulchra es* depictions can be distinguished in some poets' work, others use the same range of symbols in other contexts showing that they had not yet become fully associated with the Conception. Fray Íñigo de Mendoça incorporates a litany of Old Testament symbols to illustrate the Annunciation in his *Coplas de Vita Christi* [Verses on the Life of Christ]. The angel proves the Incarnation can take place by comparing it in the rubric to stanza 31 'con las reuelaçiones que fueron della hechas antes a los prophetas' [with the revelations about her before the prophets] (in Rodríguez Puértolas 1968: 306). Amongst the symbols fray Íñigo uses are the gate of heaven, Gideon's fleece, the rod of Aaron (Ex. 7.9), the sealed fountain, and the enclosed garden (1968: 306–307, l.31.6–33.4). The symbols fit with those later found in *Tota pulchra es* representations but are not immaculist. This litany and its superficial connection with symbols pertaining to the *Tota pulchra es* depiction show how much caution must be exercised in discerning literary examples of it. A comparison between Balaguer's and fray Íñigo's litanies, together with the evidence from Tal-

lante, leads to two conclusions. First, Old Testament symbols associated with the Immaculate Conception were extremely fluid in the fifteenth century and their presence alone cannot signal the Immaculate Conception. Second, where elements of the *Tota pulchra es* are found in loose conjunction, the way they are associated and what each poet intends by including them must be rigorously examined.

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter I traced the presence of the rose without thorn from being a symbol of the Virgin's perfect beauty and blossoming motherhood to one depicting her genealogy and her perfect nature, as well as her sinlessness. Both the rose and lily, from the Song of Songs, were readily taken as scriptural prefigurations of the Virgin, expressing her perfect beauty, singularity, and exceptional purity. Such associations made them attractive for defenders of the Immaculate Conception and both flowers became part of a composite representation of the Virgin found from the very end of the fifteenth century, the *Tota pulchra es*.

I showed how poets draw on *Tota pulchra es* symbols, particularly the enclosed garden, the rose-garden, the star of the morning, and the lily among thorns, but argued it is impossible to determine whether they are used deliberately to evoke it. The allusions of some of the symbols in the *Tota puchra es* became inextricably linked to the Immaculate Conception and continue to be appropriate to express it, such as the lily among thorns or the rose without thorn. The symbols sometimes appear in combination with each other, and this is particularly the case of the *Espill*, where Jaume Roig combines the mirror and the lily as part of the framework of the book. There are also a few *certamen* poets, such as Alcanyiç, who make suggestive combinations, which look like early literary versions of the *Tota pulchra es*. Sometimes, allusions to biblical texts, later identified with the *Tota pulchra* es, are used in conjunction with other unrelated figures. Even where appropriate symbols are associated they are not put in a systematic manner and cannot be taken to constitute a literary *Tota pulchra es*. For these reasons, poetic use of Old Testament prefigurations, which became part of it by the second decade of the sixteenth century must be considered at a developmental stage in the transition of figures from representations of the mystery of the Incarnation or Virgin Birth into immaculist symbols. The *Tota*

pulchra es and its symbols are not applied exclusively to the Immaculate Conception, as they were to be in the sixteenth century, but were applied, on occasion, to the Virgin Birth and, on others, to the Immaculate Conception, making discernment of their context all the more vital if they are to be read as signifiers of the disputed Conception doctrine.

As an element of the created world, the rose could perfectly symbolize the handiwork of the Creator. How creation and its Creator were used to depict the Immaculate Conception is developed in the next chapter, which will explore the presence of the female deity in the story of creation as a prefiguration of Mary, showing how this concept also came to underpin her Immaculate Conception.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ROSE, PERFECT FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME

Creation is a powerful symbol of the power of the Creator and of how he brought order out of chaos, restoring human nature damaged by the work of the serpent. In representations of the Immaculate Conception, like the one by Gregorio Fernández (1576–1636) (Stratton 1994: Plate 5), Mary engages in battle with the serpent. A semi-divine figure, she represents good in its triumph over evil, as she stands astride the coils of the serpent's body. Whilst the serpent is depicted as a mythical creature in Genesis, endowed with the desire and the powers to trick human beings into disobeying God's command, Mary is a mere woman in the Gospel of Luke. According to the Apocryphal Gospels, which provide a number of stories about her upbringing, she is daughter of human parents. To set poetic treatment of the Virgin and creation in context, this chapter will explore how the young girl from Nazareth evolved into the powerful symbolic figure with power to defeat the serpent. The connection between the female figure of Wisdom and the Virgin Mary in a small cluster of Old Testament texts is traced. In other words, I examine how Mary absorbs attributes proper to Wisdom and how they are employed in *cancionero* and *certamen* poems.

It is the prefiguration of Mary by Wisdom that allows her to take on the attributes of a mythical female figure, equipping her with characteristics which enable her to vanquish her opponent. Wisdom speaks in the first person and emerges as a female figure, particularly in Proverbs, where long sections of personification occur. Five books of the Old Testament are normally classified as Wisdom literature, amongst which are Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus. The literary forms of Wisdom literature vary from didactic sayings to admonitions and prayers. Some biblical scholars dispute some of the Wisdom books as part of the canon, but the genre is generally recognized as encompassing such books as Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus (or Sirach), the Book of Wisdom, and some Psalms. Ecclesiasticus is included in the canon in the Vulgate Bible but is counted amongst apocryphal biblical literature in others. Other biblical prefigurations of Mary looked at her nature or

origins, the thorn from which she, the rose issued, but Wisdom texts set her in the context of the very start of the world, placing her creation before the Fall: 'Wisdom theology has been characterized as "creation theology". That is to say, the created world is the source of Wisdom's insights' (Murphy 1990: 449).

There are six occasions in which Wisdom affirms her existence before or at the time of creation (Murphy 1990: 447–452) but only the ones applied to the Virgin in Hispanic literature are examined. I have labelled the way Mary is associated with Wisdom and with the period before creation as pre-creation. Mary's predestination was a feature of the earliest immaculist defence.[1]

Poetic Use of the Proverbs Creation Narrative

One of the principal Wisdom prefigurations of the Virgin is from Proverbs 8.23: 'Dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum, antequam quidquam faceret a principio. Ab aeterno ordinata sum et ex antiquis antequam terra fieret' [God possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before anything was made at the beginning. From everlasting, I was firmly set, from ancient times, before the earth came into being]. Proverbs 8.23 sets Wisdom's existence at the beginning of time in triplicate: before anything was made, from eternity, and before the earth was made. Modern Bible editors entitle this section of Proverbs 'Wisdom as Creator', since 'as a primal creature, Wisdom is prior to the physical world' (Rylaarsdam 1990: 444–457). The order of creation described in the subsequent verses (27–31) is linked with that described in Genesis. The Proverbs text is found as *capitulum* at vespers the length and breadth of the Peninsula, from Toledo to Gerona, in Juan de Segovia's office, and from Burgos to La Seu d'Urgell.[2]

The earliest vernacular application of Wisdom literature to the Virgin Mary is from the *Cantigas*. In the lyric poem 'Vella e minya' [beau-

[1] It is a particular feature of the unknown defender of the Conception from Heiligenkreuz (Balič 1958: 185–186; Lamy 2000: 167).

[2] Toledo: *Breviarium* (ACT 33.6), fol. 451^{v}, *Breviarium* (33.7), fol. 448^{v}, *Breviarium* (33.9), fol. 514^{v}, BB 2, fol. 483^{v}, *Opera spiritualia* (BN 9533), fol. 158^{v}, *Breviario romano adaptado al uso de los Jerónimos* (BN 9082), fol. 716^{v}, *Diurnale monasticum* (Montserrat 51), fol. 68^{r}, *Breviarium fratrum minorum secundum consuetinudinem curiae romanae* (Escorial A.III.14), fol. 432^{v}; Burgos: *Diurnale benedictino* (ACB 22), fol. 74^{v}; Seu d'Urgell: *Breviarium urgellense* (ACSU 147); Gerona: *Breviarium gerundense* (ACG 125), fol. 4^{r}.

tiful and small], Alfonso the Wise describes the Virgin as created before the world: 'ante do mundo foi todavia / criada, e que nunc'á de minguar / o seu gran ben' [before the world she was already created, and her great goodness never will be lacking]. He does not link his pre-creation reference to a comment on original sin, but instead to the Virgin's preparation for motherhood and her role in the economy of salvation: 'e porend' encarnar / quis Deu en ela' [and that is why God wanted to take flesh in her] (1959–1964: II, 199, ll.15–17, 17–18).

Correlation between immaculism and pre-creation is found for the first time in Castilian poetry in a late fourteenth-century poem by Villasandino. His opening lines are a good example of compacted immaculist topoi:

> Generosa, muy fermosa,
> sin manzilla, Virgen santa, […]
> de quien Lucifer se espanta. (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 11, ll.1–4)
>
> [Generous, most beautiful one,
> without stain, holy Virgin,
> of whom Lucifer is afraid.]

These lines link reference to Genesis 3.15 to the Virgin's spotless beauty prefigured in the Song of Songs (see Chapters 6 and 7). In the closing stanza of the poem, Villasandino returns to a reference to creation combining it with a rare use of 'inmaculata' in *cancionero* poetry:

> criada
> fuste limpia, sin error,
> por que'el alto Emperador
> te nos dio por abogada.
>
> […]
> O Beata Immaculata!
> sin error desde *ab iniçio*,
> bien barata quien te cata
> mansamente, sin bolliçio; (12, ll.37–40, 49–52)
>
> [you were created clean,
> without error,
> so that the mighty Emperor
> could give us you as our advocate.
> O Blessed Immaculate One!
> without error from the beginning,
> anyone has a good deal who looks to you gently
> and without tumult.]

He combines 'criada' with 'limpia, sin error' [created clean, without error] in the fifth stanza and in the final stanza, with 'sin error desde *ab iniçio*' [stainless from the beginning of time], which completes the pre-creation image. Although it is split over two stanzas, each is combined with 'sin error' and the repetition enables the reader to recall and reunite them in a single pre-creation image: 'criada / fuste limpia, sin error, / […] sin error desde *ab iniçio*' [you were created clean without error, without error from the beginning of time] (ll.37–38, 50–51). The reconstituted phrase links creation, conception, and sinlessness, providing evidence of the centrality of pre-creation to immaculist defence.

Because Proverbs is used so consistently in Castile as the *capitulum* at Conception vespers it is to be expected that many Castilian poets will give it pride of place in their poetic representations of the Conception. Gómez Manrique, in his 'Canción a la conçepçion de Nuestra Señora' [Song to the Conception of Our Lady], describes the Virgin as 'antes qu'el mundo criada' [created before the world] (ID3363):

> Entre todas escogida
> fuste, bien aventurada,
> en tal noche conçebida,
> antes qu'el mundo criada. (2003: 281, ll.1–4)
>
> [You were chosen
> among all women, blessed by fortune,
> conceived on such a night,
> created before the world.]

Manrique prefers to adopt the third part of the verse 'before the earth was made' which he translates as 'antes quel mundo' [before the world]. The connection between pre-creation and the origin of the Virgin is achieved by placing 'antes que el mundo criada' in apposition to 'en tal noche conçebida' (ll.3–4). Manrique presents pre-creation is one of a series of elements pointing to the Virgin's special nature: she is 'escogida' [chosen], she is 'bien aventurada' [blessed by good fortune], her conception is at a chosen point in time 'en tal noche' [on such a night], and, as the culmination of everything, her creation was predestined from all time: 'antes qu'el mundo criada'.

Frequent use of allusions to Proverbs to evoke the Virgin's Conception can be discerned in Catalan poetry where there is often a clear immaculist context for the poems. Joan Gamiça, another of the poets who was in the legal profession, being a young notary when he entered for the 1474 *certamen*, points to the Virgin's preservation from sin as an act which preceded the Fall and he combines this with an allusion to Proverbs:

Déu infinit, ans que·l món fos creat,
te preservà, puríssima e santa.
Déu infinit de tu prengué la manta
ab què ·ns quità aquell cens caregat
del primer hom. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 284, ll.31–36)

[Infinite God, before the world was created,
preserved you, most holy and pure.
Infinite God cloaked himself in your flesh
with which he took away that payment
laid down by the first man.]

Gamiça adds the Virgin's preservation 'te preservà' [he preserved you] to 'ans que·l món fós creat' [before the world was created], drawing the biblical citation closer to the new doctrine. The poet does not mention original sin directly but 'puríssima e santa' [most pure and holy] suggests it, as does 'aquell cens caregat' [that payment laid on us]. 'Cens' is a feudal payment to be made by a person under the jurisdiction of another (see above, Chapter 5). Several themes are woven together in these lines. First, the Virgin's existence before creation is evoked. A second strand is the action of 'Déu infinit' [Infinite God] in preserving the Virgin from original sin. Together, they provide indisputable evidence that Gamiça is defending the Immaculate Conception. The purpose of the Virgin's preservation, is highlighted in the next two lines, 'te prengué la manta' [he cloaked himself in your flesh]. Immaculacy is necessary because the flesh of the Virgin is to provide clothing for God.[3] Consciousness that Mary and Christ shared one flesh influenced many early apologists of the Conception (Lamy 2000: 161–164), however, the source of the idea in Valencian writing is the *Llibre d'amic e amat*. In it, Ramon Llull emphasizes how the cloth used to clothe the lover also clothed the beloved (1927: 81).

[3] Several poets writing for the 1474 *certamen* use the imagery of clothing to express the mystery of the Incarnation. Luis Munyoç uses 'e [que] lo Fill de vostra carn sagrada / tot se vestís del cap fins a la planta' [and the Son with your sacred flesh was dressed from head to foot] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 281, ll.11–12) and Pereç writes 'y Déu vestí's de l'humanal linatge' [and God dressed himself in human lineage] (295, l.11). The image is still popular in 1486, with Assenci's 'Car Jesucrist, de Déu Fill tant com vostre, / vestint la carn de vós, divinal mare' [for Jesus Christ, God's Son and yours, dressing in flesh from you, divine mother] (529, ll.13–14). Cathalà refers to regal clothing: 'Per més ennoblir la virginal manta / d'on prés Déu etern real sobrevesta' [to further ennoble the virginal mantle, whence eternal God took his tunic] (478, ll.25–26). See also Twomey 2005b and 2007b.

Jerònim Fuster, in his winning entry for the 1486 *certamen*, also connects the pre-creation of Mary with preservation: 'ans que del món creàs Déu la figura / […] vós preservà' [before God created the face of the world, he preserved you] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 438, l.2). Fuster combines Proverbs 8.23 with the creation story in Genesis. The poem opens on the creation of the world, placing the Virgin-Wisdom there. For, in a poetic vision of her sheltering under the wings of the Creator, he describes how she was part of original, unsullied creation:

> ans que del món creàs Déu la figura,
> vós preservà davall les sues ales,
> perquè [….],
>
> […] restàsseu pura. (ll.2–5)
>
> [Before God created the face of the world,
> he preserved you under his wings,
> so that you might remain pure].

The scene is more vivid than other poets' references to Wisdom prefigurations. The Creator spirit moving over the face of the waters recalls the Priestly creation story in Genesis 1.2: 'Terra autem erat inanis et vacua et tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi: et Spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas'.[4] The resurgence of 'creada' in a rhetorical question echoes the opening stanza: '¿Qui porà dir de vós, excelsa dea, / creada ·n tot ab tota gentilea / que ·n algun temps de culpa us maculassen?' [who could say of you, high goddess, created in all things with nobility, that at any time they stained you with sin] (439, ll.27–29). The question brings the stanza back to creation and strengthens its immaculist sense by threading allusion to Song of Songs 4.7 into it.

Ferrando Francés includes the anonymous poem 'Mare de Déu' [Mother of God] in his collection of *certamen* poems, believing it was an entry to the lost *certamen* of 1440. The content of the poem suggests it belonged to a poetry competition about the Conception:

> La poesia que comença 'Mare de Déu sus los cels subirana' composta de deu cobles i tornada de quatre, de caràcter immaculista, és segur que fou tramesa a un *certamen*, segons podem deduir de les al·lusions als jutges expressades en la darrera cobla. (1983: 61)

[4] John H. Marks explains that serious reading of Genesis 'reveals that the book is not the homogeneous work of a single author, for no writer would be guilty of discrepancies like those, e.g. between the accounts of Creation (cf. 1.26 with 2.7, 18, 19, and 22) or of the Flood (cf. 7.1–3 with 6.18–21). The book is rather a compilation

[The poem which begins 'Mother of God, sovereign under heaven' composed of ten stanzas and a four-line final stanza, immaculist in character, was most certainly entered for a poetry competition, as can be deduced from the references to the judges in the final stanza.]

The poem contains an important example of pre-creation imagery in the third stanza:

Abans que fos terra ne mar creada,
ayre ne lum, foch, cel ne cosa freda,
ne dins lo món hagués camp ne verneda,
ez al primer hom fos ley imposada,
éreu ja vós per Ell mayre ·legida. (1983: 62, ll.17–21)

[Before earth or sea was created,
air or light, fire, heaven, or cold matter,
before there was any field or grove,
or any law imposed on the first man,
you were chosen by Him for his mother.]

The poem divides the creation of the world into separate tasks: 'abans que fos terra ne mar creada' [before sea or earth was created] and amplifies the Bible story adding the elements: 'ayre ne lum, foch, cel ne cosa freda' [neither air nor light, nor fire, nor heaven nor cold matter]. Creation of the world is also associated with God's choice of Mary as Mother: 'éreu ja vós per Ell mare ·legida' [you were to be chosen by him as Mother]. Choosing the Virgin, which is an act carried out by God, is placed before the creation of the world and its elements. The impact is to reinforce the primordial nature of the choice as well as to underline the Virgin's receptivity, underlined in the past participle '·legida' [chosen].

Miralles's entry to the 1486 *certamen* uses the same citation from Proverbs but makes it applicable to the context in which he was writing. In his effort to win the sailing map prize offered by Ferrando Díeç, he expresses Mary's preservation through an extended nautical metaphor, which influences the pre-creation reference in the opening stanza:

Ans de crear los cels, lum ni planetes
ni fes pilars al món de quatre letres,
Déu vos creà de parts totes perfetes,
y en vós, sens par, majors virtuts ha fetes […]. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 514, ll.1–4)

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in which we recognize at least three strands of tradition. These sources of tradition are known as "J" (Yahwist), "E" (Elohist), and "P" (Priestly)' (1991: 1).

> [Before creating the heavens, light, or planets
> or making pillars for the four-point world,
> God created you with every part perfect,
> and in you, peerless one, principal virtues has set.]

The heavens, heavenly bodies, and light, are the main elements of Miralles's creation, and all enable the sailor to navigate his course. The Proverbs description of Wisdom has influenced Miralles's use of 'ans que' [before]. He refers to the firmament visible to the mariner, as well as to the pillars of the sea-going ancient world and the compass points. He seeks to combine the ancient with the modern, subscribing to the determination of the Aragonese crown to be on a par with the ancient world in Empire and in culture.

Later in the same poem, Miralles extends his pre-creation image: 'y, ans que del sol no fes la lum eterna, / vos elegí per mare d'Ell hi Filla' [and before he made the sun's eternal light, he chose you as his Mother and Daughter] (515, ll.16–17). The sun and the creation of light represent the Creator's handiwork and owe much to creation from Genesis. Miralles associates his oblique Proverbs reference even more closely with Genesis. The 'lights in the vault of heaven' (*NJB* 1985: 17) were created on the fourth day and Miralles sets creation of the Virgin firmly before: 'Déu vós creà' [God created you]. God approves her creation as perfect: 'de parts totes perfetes' [in every part perfect].

The choice of light to represent creation has deeper significance. Elsewhere in the Bible, it is used to oppose the darkness of evil (John 1.8). Miralles's pre-creation images have a double sense. They allude to creation of the world and to the relationship between Mary and Christ, the Light of the world. The relationship between the two is found in various forms in many Marian offices, where Mary is described as the dawn, which brings forth the sun. Conception offices adopt such antiphons: 'surgit ut aurora maria uirgo decora / Que produxit mundo solem verum dei patri p[ro]lem' [Mary, beautiful Virgin, arises like the dawn / which brings forth the true sun, offspring of the Father] (*Breviarium toletanum* [ACT 33.9], fol. 516^{r}). Catalan Nativity offices always depict the Virgin as the bearer of the Sun of Justice:

> R / Natiuitas tua dei genetrix uirgo gaudium annuntiauit in universo mundo.
> Ex te ortus est sol iustitie christus deus noster, qui soluens maledictionem dedit nobis benedictionem et confundens mortem donauit nobis vitam sempiternam. (*Breviarium secundum consuetudinem sedis vicensis* [AEV 82], fol. 457^{r})

> [R / Your Nativity, Virgin Mother of God, is harbinger of joy in all the world.
> From you is born the sun of justice, Our Lord Christ, who breaking the curse, gives us blessing, and confounding death, gives us eternal life.]

Juan de Segovia's Conception office adapts the Nativity response about Christ, the sun of justice, substituting 'conceptio' for 'natiuitas' (*Breviarium gerundense* [ACG 125, fol. 6^{v}). Another variant can be found in a Pyrenean Conception office: 'Hec est stella maris per quam fulsit lux solaris' [she is the star of the sea through whom the sunlight shines] (*Breviarium urgellense* [ACSU 147], fol. 318^{r}).

Valencian poets were also probably inspired by Ramon Llull who associates the Virgin with light at several points in his *Llibre d'amic e amat*: 'Lo llum de la cambra de l'amat venc inluminar la cambra de l'amic' [the light in the chamber of the beloved illuminated the chamber of the lover] (1929: 46). In the same book, he depicts an illuminating flood of light which descends on the beloved and associates it with an outpouring of love: 'Dix l'amic a l'amat: —Tu que umples lo sol de resplandor, umple mon cor d'amor' [the lover said to the beloved: "You who fill the sun with brilliance, fill my heart with love"] (27).

Miralles must have known the liturgical responses about Mary's role in bringing forth both sun and light. As in the anonymous 1440 *certamen* poem, his pre-creation image is allied to God's selection of Mary in 'vós elegí' [he chose you] and he describes the Virgin as a smaller guiding light: 'per a sa lum us féu riqua lanterna' [for his light, he made you into a fair lantern] (l.15). The association of Mary with Genesis, creation, with motherhood or procreation, and with light imagery is appropriate to the prize Miralles tried, and failed, to win.

Light also inspired Francí de Vilalba, as he begins his *certamen* poem on a pre-creation allusion. He presents the Virgin's existence before creation to show that whilst the world was in darkness she was already present as the dawn: 'ans que el lum mostràs lo primer dia […] / vós excel·lís' [before the light showed forth on the first day, you excelled]. Her existence before the Fall and exemption from sin, 'que l'ome fet avia' [which man committed], are then inferred: 'exhemta fos sola vós sens par' [you alone were exempt, peerless one]. These lines form the opening lines of the poem, colouring the remainder with an immaculist hue:

> Ans que la lum mostràs lo primer dia
> de l'Infinit per obra singular,
> vós excel·lís, sancta verge Maria,

car del peccat que l'home fet havia
exhemta fós sola vós sens par. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 521, l.1–5)

[Before the light showed forth on the first day
by singular handiwork of the Infinite One
you excelled, holy Virgin Mary,
for from the sin which man had committed
you alone were exempted, peerless one.]

Instead of beginning the poem with a reference to Proverbs 8.23, Vilalba merely suggests it in allusions to creation such as 'la lum' and 'lo primer dia': 'God said, "Let there be light" […] and God divided light from darkness […]. Evening came and morning came: the first day' (*NJB* 1985: 17).

The Proverbs reference was taken so much for granted that many poets, among them Luís García, do not cite it but hint at it through their use of 'creada':

Vingués en la lum del món. E creada,
ab voler estrem, vos regonegué.
En aquell instant, dels cels devallada
és tota virtut en vós transportada. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 319, ll.21–24)

[You came in the light of the world
and, once created with intense will, he recognized you.
At that moment, all virtue,
descended from heaven, was transported into you.]

García associates the Virgin with the light of the world, and opposes the darkness of sin to her. His description of her origin has aspects in common with the birth of mythological deities.[5] By using 'en aquell instant' [at that instant] the poet points to the moment of the Virgin's conception, an important point of debate after Henry of Ghent had focused attention on it, in order to decribe the downpour of grace which prevented her from being deprived of original justice. García was no more than a scribe at the time of penning his *certamen* entry in 1474 but he went on to become a Town Councillor in 1486, elected by the parish of St Stephen, by which time he was a notary.

[5] See, for example, Philippe Bourgeaud's study of the ways in which the cult of the Magna Mater influenced that of the Virgin Mary and of her Son (2004: 72–119). Light was particularly associated with goddesses of the moon, like Tanit, Selene, and Artemis in the Roman pantheon (Benko 1993: 23).

Creation allusion is not far beneath the surface of one final example of how Proverbs 8.23 was used poetically. Miralles's other entry, this time for the 'joya ràdix' [prize of the rod], provides a description redolent with mythological allusion. It begins with creation of the sun: 'Los daurats grius de Febo no volaven' [the gilded gryphens of Phoebus did not yet fly] (in 1983: 454, l.1). There is a dramatic glimpse of God speaking over the 'aygues mortes' [lifeless waters] (l.6) to begin the work of creation. The reference to places in flower recalls the Garden of Eden. As an afterthought to his lengthy review of creation, Miralles adds: 'Ans de tot, vos elegí per mare' [before all this, he selected you as mother] (l.10), which echoes Proverbs 8.23 in a similar way to García's poem. The description of creation and its poetic possibilities have all but escaped the hands of their author and the link is finally made brusquely.

The Virgin and the Creation of the Abyss

Some *certamen* poets choose to celebrate Mary's pre-creation with an echo of Proverbs 8.24, a reading frequently found in Conception liturgy, particularly in Castile: 'Nondum erant abyssi et ego iam concepta eram' [for the abyss did not exist and I was conceived].[6] The 1474 *certamen* contains an entry by an anonymous Castilian who refers to the conception of Mary before the abyss as one of a series of citations from Wisdom and Song of Songs literature. The first part of Proverbs 8.24 is translated into Castilian, followed by a shortened Latin version of the rest:

> Y en los capitoles mismos
> responde el mismo profeta
> contra argumentos sophismos:
> 'Ahún no eran los abismos
> *ego jam eram concepta'*. (312, ll.36–40)

[6] An alternative translation is provided by the *NJB*: 'the deep was not when I was born / nor were the springs with their abounding waters' (1985: 976). The reading is used at sext in several liturgies, all from the archdiocese of Toledo, and four of them closely connected with Toledo: *Breviario romano adaptado al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN 9082), *Breviario de Calahorra* (ACC 17), *Breviario de Toledo* (BB 2), *Breviarium toletanum* (ACT 33.7), and *Breviarium toletanum* (ACT 33.9).

[And in these particular chapters
the same prophet responds
against arguments with sophistry
'The abyss was not yet
I was already conceived'.]

The poet begins the poem with what he terms a 'misterio muy profundo' [very deep mystery] (l.1), creation and redemption, and their interdependence, 'principio y fin ineffable' [beginning and ineffable end] (l.6). This overview of salvation history is followed by a digression, as the poet turns to a *captatio benevolentiae*, bridging the deep mystery and the prefiguration of Mary as conceived before the abyss:

Porque no sé si erraré
datme lengua con que fable
siquiere de lo palpable
pues que para mas no sé. (312, ll.7–10)

[Because I do not know if I will go astray,
give me a tongue to speak
even of what is obvious
because I do not know anything more.]

The inclusion of a *captatio benevolentiae* is commonplace in poetry but the uncertainty of the unknown Castilian seems greater.[7] He is going to speak about the obvious, 'lo palpable', and implies he is not prepared or able to go into any deeper doctrinal issues: 'pues para mas no sé' [I am not fit to know anything more]. Within the four lines, 'no sé'

[7] Examples of *captatio* within the 1474 *certamen* abound:

Flach és l'enginy si vós no m'ajudau,
mare d'Aquell qui lo món ha salvat.
No puch errar si vós ab mi us armau,
plena de bé los hulls mi girau,
vostre servent qui us ha tostemps amat.
Rés en lo món a mi tant no m'aterra,
com és en dir, Verge, vostres lahors.
La mia mà la ploma ·b por aferra. (315, ll.1–8)

[Weak is my understanding, if you do not help me
Mother of the One who saved the world.
I cannot go wrong if you stand firm with me,
full of goodness your eyes turn to me,
your servant, who has always loved you.
Nothing in the world is so awesome
as recounting, Virgin, your praises.
My hand with fear grasps the pen.]

[I do not know] appears twice. The Castilian emphasizes his lack of knowledge, and this suggests he may not be a cleric as many of the *certamen* entrants were. In 1486, nine of the twenty-four entrants were clerics with the professions of a further five unknown. In 1474, the ratio of clerics or theologically trained entrants was smaller with nine out of forty and a wider range of professions represented.

The anonymous poet then turns to the metaphor of the 'romero' [pilgrim] faced with a deep chasm. This is at the same time the deep mystery of faith and a linguistic chasm. He compares the pilgrim's heavy pack, to the poem he is delivering, which will need translating or transporting:

> Como romero que prueva
> para passar algún vado
> por algún bordón que leva
> mi obra, en son de sser nueva
> será, mas cierto, translado. (ll.11–15)
>
> [Like a pilgrim who seeks
> to pass a deep chasm
> because of the bundle he is carrying
> my poem, new in sound,
> will be certainly translated (transported)]

The poet points to the lack of understanding between the audience and himself as 'algún vado' [a deep chasm]. His poem will sound strange

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Berthomeu Dimas, a priest, connected with the Carmelite Monastery in Valencia, and who wrote for three of the *certàmens*, expresses a similar unwillingness to rely on human reasoning:

> Si m'atrevesch entrar l'escura silva,
> no sens temor, delit me dóna senda.
> Lo poch que y sé, indigne, dir no dubte,
> vença la por lohar la Mare verge,
> no ha bastat natura ·b son ingeni
> l'ús de rahó ni la humana claustra,
> tanta lahor compendre ·n lo seu ésser,
> que l'ignorant no puixa dir sens torçre. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 310, ll.1–8)
>
> [If I dare to enter the dark wood
> fearlessly delight shows me a path.
> What little I know, unworthy, I do not doubt to say,
> I overcome it to praise the Virgin Mother,
> neither nature and its wit, nor use of reason
> nor human definition have proved sufficient,
> so much praise is held in her being
> that the ignorant man can say nothing without going astray.]

to the audience: 'en son de sser nueva' [new in sound], and this could be because it is written in Castilian, but more likely it is because the poet himself is unknown to the *certamen* community, mostly a tightly knit group from Valencian society. The journey across the chasm fits well with the poet's pre-creation image, which he expresses in the following stanza: 'aun no eran los abismos' [the abyss was not] (312, l.39).

After his long *captatio benevolentiae*, the poet declares his intention of praising the Virgin and uses familiar and erudite doctrines: 'Sigamos en sus lahores / nuestras muy savias doctrinas' [Let us continue her praises with our wise doctrines]. His poetic style and its content have both been roundly criticized: 'els octosíl·labs castellans d'aquest poeta anónim castellà no fan sinó posar en vers, fins i tot en llatí, diverses profecies bíbliques i invocacions litúrgiques aplicades tradicionalment a Maria' [the anonymous poet's octosyllabic lines in Castilian do nothing more than set out in verse various biblical prophecies and liturgical invocations traditionally applied to the Virgin] (Ferrando Francés 1983: 241). His perceived inability to grasp his material and make himself understood may explain the poet's desire to rely on well-known doctrines, a litany of scriptural and liturgical phrases in Latin, woven into the remaining stanzas.

Many poets begin by invoking divine help and their pleas are not dissimilar to the Castilian's. Pere Alcanyiç, a doctor in Medicine and native of Játiva, begins with a divine invocation to counteract his 'flach enginy' [weak understanding]. Alcanyiç's words are all the more interesting given that Ferrando Francés speculates that he may have ended his life in the hands of the Inquisition. He also expresses a desire that his will to praise the Virgin may be strengthened:

> Altisme Déu, Vós qui sou nostra via,
> puix lo voler tant en mi se reforça
> per mils lohar a la Verge Maria,
> flach és l'enginy e potència mia,
> guarniu-me Vós de saber e de força. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 331, ll.1–5)
>
> [Highest God, you who are our path,
> since desire is so strong in me
> to praise the Virgin Mary,
> but weak is my understanding and power,
> gird me up with knowledge and strength.]

Alcanyiç opens the second stanza of his poem on an allusion to the abyss and combines with it a statement supporting the Virgin's immac-

ulate nature 'del crim primer fós neta' [of the first sin you were clean]: 'l'eternal Déu no sent creat l'abisme, / de si formant substancial concepte, / ans de tot, véu hun fermall tan insigne' [the eternal God, forming a concept of himself in substance, before everything else, set his eye on a valuable clasp] (ll.18, 11–13). According to Coromines, 'fermall' is an ornament to join two pieces of clothing (1990–1991: III, 977). The Virgin is objectified as a beautiful piece of jewellery, which has the capacity to join two different pieces of cloth or two different substances. She joins both human and divine at the Incarnation. Alcanyiç conveys the Virgin's immaculate origins by showing God contemplating the beauty of the Virgin 'hun fermall tan insigne' before the beginning of time.

Reference to the abyss can be combined with creation. Assencí, writing for the 1486 *certamen*, sets the Virgin's pre-creation alongside creation of the abyss: 'Ans de crear los cels, terra y abisme, / vós éreu ja la mare de l'Altisme' [before the heavens, earth, and abyss were created, you were Mother of the Highest] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 530, ll.59–60). Assencí combines creation of the world including the heavens, the earth, and the abyss with the moment of the Incarnation, the new creation, which was to reverse the effect of the Fall. Assencí's attempt to make the abyss an adjunct to creation leads him to a trite rhyme 'abisme-altisme', with bathetic effect, at the end of the fourth stanza.

Some poets combine reference to the abyss with other biblical prefigurations of Mary. The burning bush (Exodus 3.2) migrated from symbolizing the conception of Christ by his Virgin Mother to symbolizing the Immaculate Conception. Vloberg includes plates from the Grimani breviary from the early sixteenth century and from the Spanish *Inmaculadas* by Zurbarán, Murillo, and El Greco, which depict the Immaculate Conception in the *Tota pulchra es*, surrounded by biblical symbols (see Chapter 7) but he indicates that the burning bush was not one of them (1958: Plates XIV, XV, XVI, and XVII). As a signifier of the Virgin Birth, it is present in Berceo's *Loores* along with many other prefigurations of the Virgin, the rod of Jesse, the bridalchamber (Ps.19.5), Gideon's fleece (Judges 6.38), and Ezekiel's closed door (44.2) (ll.9a–b; 10a–b; 11a–d; 12a–b):

> La mata que paresco al pastor encendida
> e remanesció sana com antes tan complida,
> a ti significava que non fust corrompida
> nin de la firmedumne del tu voto movida. (1975: 74, ll.6a–d)

[the bush which appeared in flame to the shepherd
and was perfectly unharmed as before,
signified you who were not corrupted
nor moved from the determination of your vow.]

In the fifteenth century, in Íñigo de Mendoza's *Vita Christi*, the burning bush is still present as prophetic proof of the Virgin birth, being found among the words of greeting which the angel speaks at the Annunciation. Like the image of light passing through glass, the bush which was aflame but was not consumed is a perfect image of how the Virgin could conceive but not lose her virginity:

la çarça que vio en su vida,
seyendo pastor Moyses,
abrasada y ençendida,
de biuas llamas ardida
mas toda verde despues; (306, ll.31, 1–5)

[the bush which Moses saw,
as a shepherd on his way,
burning and aflame,
with bright flames ablaze
but quite green afterwards;]

Because Mercader is writing for the 1486 *certamen*, his combined image of the abyss and the burning bush have an immaculist context. His intention is to combine both with pre-creation allusion in 'ja vista sou': 'Ans que l'abís ¡o cremant gavarrera! / ja vista sou per Déu pura e sancera' [before the abyss, o burning bush!, you were seen by God pure and complete]. Immediately prior to his reference to Proverbs, the poet had applied creation verbs twice to the Virgin: 'tan noble creada' [created so noble] and 'quant ser pogués per al qu· Ell vos creà' [how much greater you could be for him who created you] (508, ll.9–12) and therefore has made his position clear on the Virgin's existence before creation. Mercader addresses the Virgin directly as 'cremant gavarrera' and he is applying its special properties, of burning and not being consumed to the Virgin's sinlessness. She was pure and complete, even though she was conceived of human parents.

Whilst there are a small number of allusions to Proverbs 8.24: two from the 1474 and two from the 1486 *certamen*, its limited usage suggests it was less favoured than other Wisdom texts. In fact, there was another Wisdom prefiguration of the Virgin's creation before time, which was used far more often by fifteenth-century poets.

Pre-Creation of the Virgin and References to Ecclesiasticus 24.9

Many fifteenth-century poets site their pre-creation references in Ecclesiasticus 24.9: 'From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and, for eternity, I shall remain'. The text was one of the most frequently used biblical texts in Conception offices at vespers.[8] But according to scriptural commentarists, connections should be made between Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus. According to Alexander Di Lella, 'Ben Sira [the author of the Ecclesiasticus text] derived the idea of personified Wisdom from Prov. 1. 20–33; 8. 4–36; 9. 1–6, 11', whilst the Wisdom poem in Proverbs 8 provided him with his model (1991: 504).

Gómez Manrique, shows his knowledge of the liturgy, and uses '*ab initio creada*' in his 'Loores e suplicaciones a Nuestra Señora' [Praises and Supplications to Our Lady] (ID3400): 'O fija de Dios y madre / desde abenicio creata!' [O daughter of God and mother / from the beginning created] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: II, 482, ll.11–12). He vernacularizes the Latin 'abenicio' and interprets it as a noun, instead of an adverbial phrase, requiring the tautological 'desde' to render 'time from when'. Gómez Manrique keeps '*creata*' in Latin to maintain the rhyme with 'intata'.

He refers to Ecclesiasticus 24.9 again (l.90) and, on this second occasion, 'desde abinicio criada' [created from the beginning] is linked to 'pulchra e decora' [beautiful and decorous]. Beauty, in allusion to the Song of Songs, is inextricably linked to creation and deepens the immaculist impact for the reader (see Chapter 7).

Both Francisco Vidal González and Raymond Foulché-Delbosc take account of the importance of the gloss which accompanies Gómez Manrique's Conception poem in the Biblioteca Nacional manuscript (MN 24). Foulché-Delbosc reproduces the gloss in full after the poem (1912–1915: II, 149), whilst Vidal González follows each stanza by its gloss (2003: 287–293). Dutton and Krogstadt reproduce only the poems

[8] *Breviarium toletanum* (ACT 33.6), *Breviarium toletanum* (ACT 33.7), *Breviarium toletanum* (ACT 33.9), *Breviario romano y suplemento al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN Res.186), *Breviario romano adaptado al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN 9082), *Breviarium franciscanum* (BN 21.6), *Diurnale monasticum* (Montserrat 51), *Breviarium ilerdense* (ACL 16), *Breviarium urgellense* (ACSU incunable 147), *Breviarium secundum consuetudinem ecclesie segobiensis* (B272), *Breviario de Toledo* (BB2), *Diurnale benedictino* (ACB 22). It is also found in three devotionaries for private use: *Varia spiritualia* (Montserrat 830), *Devotionarium* (A III.14), *Opera spiritualia* (BN 9533).

from the manuscripts they consult. Modern division of genres finds the medieval mix of prose and poetry unacceptable.[9]

The gloss provides an important insight into how Ecclesiasticus 24.9 was interpreted in the fifteenth century. 'Desde abenicio' means 'en la sciencia e entendimiento divino' [in divine wisdom and understanding] (2003: 291, l.100). Its author believes Mary belonged to the period of creation because of her predestination by God. She was not physically but mentally created at the time of creation. The first reference to 'concepta in mente divina' [conceived in God's mind] is found in a treatise on the Conception by Pseudo-John of Mandeville (Lamy 2000: 167–168).

In the gloss, the full text of Ecclesiasticus 24.9 is cited and translated: 'Abinicio *et ante secula creata sum, et usque ad futurum seculum non desinam*. Desde el comienço et ante delos siglos soy criada, e ante el siglo venidero durare' [from the beginning and before the ages I am created, and, for eternity, I shall remain]. The quotation, semi-vernacularized, is used without explanation in the poem but the author of the gloss explains that it prefigures the Virgin: 'De donde tomó el autor, puesto que esto sea dicho por la sabiduria e el entendimiento spiritual para la Virgen María' [From there, the author took it, since this is applied through wisdom and spiritual understanding to the Virgin Mary] (2003: 291–292).

Jaume Roig devotes a long passage to defence of the doctrine through reason, combining his arguments with pre-creation and with reference to the mind of God. He argues that, if, for a human doctor, prevention is better than cure, then this is surely also the case for the 'alt metge Déu' [God, the great doctor]. Roig, as a doctor, may have been aware of an anonymous commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, which has many similarities with his argument:

> Cum medicus preservat aliquem ab infirmitate quam incurrisset nisi praeservasset, vel cum miles defendit dominum ne incidat in periculum, isti melius liberant et salvant quam si permississent incidisse. In malum et postea liberassent. (Vat. Lat. 932, fol. 252ra, cited in Lamy 2000: 363, n.112)

[9] The question of the mix of prose and poetry was addressed by Severin, who argues that the term *cancionero*, the name traditionally given to the genre, is a misnomer (1994). Her project to digitize the *cancioneros* is looking at them in a more holistic way.

> [When a doctor keeps someone from getting an illness they would have caught if they had not been preserved from it, when a knight defends his lord, preventing him from incurring danger, they deliver and save better than if they had allowed the person to fall into trouble to then deliver them from it.]

Within this immaculist context, Roig includes an amplified version of the pre-creation theme:

> dignificada, deïficada
> ans que'l mon fos, ell gloriós
> en l'eternal in mente, tal
> com papa fa, la reservà
> e prelegí. (1978: 161)
>
> [dignified, deified,
> before the world,
> in eternity
> in his mind,
> as a father does,
> he, glorious, preserved and pre-elected her.]

Roig makes explicit 'in mente' [in God's mind], commented upon by the author of the gloss to Gómez Manrique's poem (Foulché-Delbosc 1912–1915: II, 148–149; 2003: 289–293). Although Roig points to Mary's selection by God, he does not see any need to refer specifically to creation.

In Roig's poem, the idea of creation is, however, obliquely contained within 'deïficada', from *deus* and *facere*, which evokes creation in its literal meaning of 'made in the image of God'. It, therefore, replaces 'criada' [created], enhancing its meaning. The use of 'deïficada' is not uncommon in Marian poetry. For example, Pedro de Santa Fe (c.1400–1450), a poet whose work is copied in the *CG*, and who is known to have accompanied Alfons V's retinue to Naples, uses it in a list of epithets in his 'Loores de Santa María' [Praises of Holy Mary] (ID2631): 'colunba deyficada' [deified dove] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: VII, 437). Given the misogyny of Roig, it is likely that his use of the epithet was an additional way of placing Mary at a distance from ordinary females. It may have seemed a small step to place her on an equal footing with the deity, given that the distance which separated her from the rest of humanity was so great. Another reason might be that Roig was accustomed to writing in a slightly outmoded troubadouresque style.[10]

[10] I follow the comments of Ferrando Francés on the 'insistència dels poetes en

He unquestioningly adopted deification of the beloved, transposing troubadour homage to *latria* not *dulia*.

Although pre-creation references may not be used in dedicated Conception poems, the way poets refer to Ecclesiasticus 24.9 places the Virgin's predestination at the heart of immaculacy. Joan Roïç de Corella, a prestigious poet probably from Gandia near Valencia, uses 'ans del segle' [before the ages] in the poem he submitted to the 1474 *certamen*. Roïç de Corella was of aristocratic origins, probably son of Ausiàs Roïç de Corella, and wrote a number of poetic and religious works, including *La vida de la gloriosa Anna* [The Life of the Glorious St Anne]. He also wrote a number of mythological works, among them the *Plant de la reina Hècuba* [The Lament of Queen Hecuba], *La Història de Jason e Medea*, *La Història de Leànder y Hero*, and *Tragèdia de Càldesa*. One of his best-known works was the translation of Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*. Since he graduated as a Master of Theology between 1468 and 1471, he most probably was aware of Pseudo-John of Mandeville's defence of the Conception:

> E mostre's ver que, stant dins lo sepulcre,
> lo vostre cors nunqu·s pogué fer cendra,
> lo qual, vivint, matava tots los vérmens,
> puys era carn d'Aquell, qui ans del segle
> vos elegí perquè li fósseu mare. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 253, ll.8–12)
>
> [And it can be shown that, even in the grave,
> your body could never turn to ash,
> for living, it killed all the worms,
> since it was flesh of Him who, before the ages,
> chose you to be Mother.]

Instead of combining 'ans del segle' with a creation image, Roïç de Corella combines the reference to Mary's incorruptibility and to her selection from everlasting for her role as Mother of God. Christ and God are subsumed into one Being, 'Aquell'. He emphasizes that the flesh of Christ and of Mary are one and evokes Mandeville's idea. However, his pre-creation image is linked to her Assumption.

Similarly, Pérez de Guzmán opens his Joys poem, 'Himno a los gozos de Nuestra Senyora' [Hymn to the Joys of Our Lady] (ID0073 S 0072), with references to pre-creation. The link between the Virgin and Wis-

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uns canons literaris de tradició trobadoresca els quals resultaven ja arcaïtzants' [the insistence of the poets on some literary canons which are already deliberately looking to the past] (1983: 221).

dom is explicit in the opening line of the poem: 'Virgen […] criada'. He then links 'criada' [created] to 'elegida e consagrada' [chosen and consecrated] through the rhyme. The three past participles underline the active role of God in her consecration and the passivity of the subject on whom the divine grace is operated. The allusions to pre-creation make it apparent that Pérez de Guzmán is dedicating the first stanza to the Conception:

> Virgen que fueste criada
> ab inicio e eterno;
> del rey diuino e superno
> elegida e consagrada; (Foulché-Delbosc 1912: I, 270, ll.1–4)
>
> [Virgin who was created
> from the beginning and from eternity;
> by the supernal and divine king
> chosen and consecrated.]

He associates Ecclesiasticus 24.9 with the Virgin's preservation from original sin, 'de aquel vicio conseruada / comun e original' [from that common and original vice preserved] (ll.5–6). His choice of 'comun' to describe original sin has the effect of separating the Virgin from the rest of humanity, which suffers its effects.

Use of pre-creation images in immaculist poems had a lengthy history in the kingdom of Aragon. The poet of 'Mare de Déu' [Mother of God], an entry for the 1440 *certamen*, introduces a pre-creation image, using Ecclesiasticus to underline the concept of Mary's creation before the world: 'E com siats ans dels setgles prevista / e per Déu ja al misteri disposta' [as you were planned before the ages, and already made ready by God for the mystery] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 63). 'Ans dels setgles', *ante saecula*, echoes Ecclesiasticus 24.9 but the poet combines it with 'prevista' [planned], to point to the predestination of the Virgin. It is her conception of Christ to which he refers in 'al misteri'.

Other Pre-Creation Images in Fifteenth-Century Poetry

Not all poets translate or cite one of the biblical texts about the creation of Wisdom but they may conceptualize it. For Boreland commenting on Montesino's poetry, wax, on which God's image is imprinted, is a type of creation. She explains how wax is a metaphor connected to generation: 'in a perfect creation, the reflection of the idea in the mind of God shines forth in all its brilliance from the wax' (1981: 323). She

shows how perfection includes Adam, the original creation, and the new creation of the Virgin and Christ. Boreland notes that that the image is also present in Dante's *Paradiso*.[11]

The metaphor of the wax imprint was a recurring one as a representation of the Incarnation in Catalan religious poetry. In Roig's version, rhyme with 'exempta' allows him to introduce an exposé in support of the Immaculate Conception and a diatribe against opponents of the doctrine. Having already cited Wisdom literature in 'ans que'l mon fos', Roig returns to creation but now refers to Mary as part of the original creation blueprint through the image of the print on wax:

> D'aquell'amprempta
> original, cort divinal
> ha preservat e reservat
> aquesta sola. (1978: 156)
>
> [From that original imprint
> the divine court
> has preserved and reserved
> her alone.]

Jerònim Fuster, in his winning entry in 1486, uses the image of wax to exemplify the Virgin's perfect purity. As a foil to 'exempta', Fuster describes the Incarnation as the imprint of the Son on the pure wax of the Virgin. Because Fuster is creating a regal picture of God, the description of the Virgin's undefiled nature as wax, kept smooth by the rays of the sun, is harmonious and fits with its use by a king to seal important documents:

> L'eternal Rey, qui us honra d'onor vera,
> ací volgué fósseu de crims exempta
> que los seus raigs de la més alta spera,
> pura sens crim, conservaven la cera
> òn lo sagell de vostre Fill s'emprempta. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 439, ll.30–34)
>
> [The eternal God who honours you with true honour
> wanted you so much to be free from sins
> that the rays from the highest sphere
> kept the wax clear
> where the seal of your Son is set.]

[11] Boreland quotes the following stanza: 'Se fosse a punto la cera dedutta / e fosse il cielo in sua virtù suprema / la luce del suggel parebbe tutta' (Canto XIII. 73) (1981: 323).

The rays of the sun, in the metaphor of light on glass, are already connected with the Immaculate Conception in 'Lirs virginals' [Virginal lilies] (see Chapter 6). The image is vivid in Fuster's rendering but poets writing for the *certamen* did not seek originality. Pere d'Anyó's poem, immediately after Fuster's in the 1486 *certamen* collection uses 'emprempta' in the same position and stanza as Fuster:

> Si fon creat Adam de terra pura
> sens procehir en aquell algun mèrit,
> molt més, donchs, vós, per traure'l de tristura,
> devíeu ser més d'altra creatura
> del vostre Fill creada sens demèrit.
> Car d'un tal mal ab lo Fill sou exempta
> perquè ·l sagell fos tal qual és l'enprempta. (442, ll.30–36)
>
> [If Adam were created from virgin earth
> without accruing in that any merit,
> how much more, were you, having brought him out of sorrow,
> more than any other creature
> created by your Son without negative qualities
> for from such an evil with your Son you are exempt
> because the seal was just like the imprint].

D'Anyó unites a creation image with scholastic argument. He parallels Adam's creation from pure earth and the Virgin's, arguing she must be greater than any other because of her contribution to redemption. 'Fon creat Adam de terra pura' [Adam was created from virgin earth] and the Virgin's natural state resembled it: 'creada sens demèrit' [created without any negative qualities]. The indefinite tenses used in the scholastic argument address the question of fittingness, an argument used by the earliest of defenders of the doctrine: 'devíeu ser més d'altra creatura' [she ought to be more than any other creature]. The final lines of the stanza place the Virgin on a par with her son 'ab lo Fill sou exempta' [you are exempt together with your Son]. D'Anyó argues that the seal and the imprint are the same, therefore, that the Virgin must be exempt from sin.

Mary's presence at the moment of creation can be evoked through representing creation through metonymy. This is the case in Tallante's 'Otra obra suya sobre el pecado original' [Another of his Poems on Original Sin] (ID 1002) :

> dios eterno trino y vno
> antes de nombrar alguno
> de los tiempos año y mes
> Te miro fragante rosa

luz de vida
por la mas marauillosa
y escogida. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 129, ll.39–45)

[Eternal God, three and one,
before naming any of the seasons, year and month
saw you, fragrant rose,
light of life
as the most marvellous
and chosen.]

Tallante's is a complex rendering of pre-creation. Since the 'act of naming is a very important symbol, which has in it an element of creative activity' (Hooke 1962: 179), Mary's predestination can also be suggested through it.

The second element of Tallante's pre-creation theme is vision. Mary could be observed at the time of creation because she already existed. Creation in Genesis is a two-stage process in the Priestly story. After the creation command: 'Let the earth produce vegetation' (Gen. 1.11), God observes the created item and approves it: 'God saw that it was good' (Gen.1.13). In the simple words 'te miro' [he looked at you], there are several concepts implicit. The first is God's expression of love for the Virgin Mary. The second is that of her selection by him. Finally, he approves her, as he does all the created beings and objects.

Several Catalan poets adopt vision as creation. Vallmanya dedicates the entire opening stanza of his *certamen* entry to an exposé of God's vision of Mary:

L'enteniment, mirant la presciència
de l'Infinit ésser tan infinida,
mirà tan alt la sua gran potència,
mirà los cels, los àngels, la ·ccel·lència,
lo sol mostrant perfectió complida,
mirà lo món y la florida terra
pel Creador diversament brodada,
y mirà com pogué fer que la erra
universal en nengun temps fes guerra
a vostra carn, que ·l seu Verb s'a ·justada.
Y així us creà sens crim sobre natura,
alta sens par, més excelent, més pura. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 464, ll.1–12)

[Understanding, seeing that there was such infinite foreknowledge
of the Infinite One,
saw his great power so high,
saw the heavens, the angels, the excellence,

the sun showing complete perfection
saw the world and the flowery earth
embroidered in many ways by the Creator,
and he saw how he could ensure that universal wrongdoing
should never wage war on your flesh
which his Word has made ready.
And so he created you without sin above nature,
high, peerless one, most excellent, most pure.]

Vallmanya refers to the idea of God's omniscience: 'l'enteniment' [understanding] and 'la presciència de l'Infinit' [the foreknowledge of the Infinite One], explored already with reference to Gómez Manrique's poem. He describes the hierarchy of heaven, with the angels, as well as its physical features. Angels will, later in the poem, form an important element of his argument about the Virgin's purity. The perfect creation must include preparation for redressing the harm caused by sin and God's perfect creation included what was necessary to achieve his plan. Vallmanya develops the idea of creation as vision and mentions elements of the Genesis story: the earth, the flowers, the sun, and the heavens. He describes the perfection of the earth with its flowery embroidery. Within this creation as vision, the poet finally turns to that of the Virgin: 'Y així us creà sens crim sobre natura' [he created you without crime above nature], so that, even though natural creation represents 'perfectió complida' [complete perfection], the Virgin is yet more perfect because she is 'sobre natura' [above nature]. The creation of the Virgin takes place together with natural creation before the Fall, so that she can avoid sin: 'Mirà com pogué fer que la erra / universal en nengun temps fes guerra / a vostra carn' [He saw how he could ensure that universal wrongdoing never waged war on your flesh] (464, ll.8–10). The opening stanza develops pre-creation imagery to foster an immaculist setting for the poem as a whole. Towards the end of the poem, Vallmanya returns to the description of creation and repeats many of the same elements:

Però rahó veig clarament demostra,
essent vós d'Ell y Ell de pasta vostra,
que ·n vós major esguart que ·n altri ·s dóna,
y en vós açò més que en altra no fóra,
si del peccat traure-us no merexquésseu,

[…]
Donchs preservà-us que ·n lo crim no cayguésseu
ans que pensàs crear los cels, los àngels,
lo món, lo sol, ni ·ls replandents archàngels. (466, ll.66–72)

> [But reason clearly demonstrates
> you being of him and he of your matter
> that for you there is greater respect than for any other,
> and that would not be so for you more than any other,
> if you were not worthy to be kept from sin,
> so, he preserved you so that you did not fall into sin,
> before he thought of creating the heavens, the angels,
> the world, the sun, or the shining archangels.]

Reference to creation is merged with an argument drawn from reason, taking its point of departure from the one pure flesh that unites Mother and Son. As at the beginning of the poem, the creation of the Virgin is set prior to natural and angelic creation but this time Vallmanya focuses his attention on the heavenly sphere more than on the earthly one, mentioning heaven and angels as well as archangels. Creation of the universe and the 'alt companyia' (l.76) are present again in the following stanza and, finally, Vallmanya returns in the closing stanza to angels, outlining the purpose of their inclusion in the order of creation: 'La puritat dels àngels no ·s tan vera / que gens ab vós, senyora, s'acompare' [the purity of the angels is not so true that it can be compared with yours, lady] (ll.85–86). Early defenders of the Conception, like Pseudo-John of Mandeville, used Anselm's argument that the angels had no sin in them and therefore the Virgin too was sinless: 'Unde Anselmus: "Decebat ut eius hominis scilicet Christi conceptio de matre purissima fieret": Ex quo patet eam etiam angelis esse puriorem: sed angeli ab omnibus peccatis sunt immunes: ergo et beata virgo' [Whence Anselm: "It was fitting that the conception of the man, Christ, should be from a pure mother": from which it is clear that she also is purer than an angel: but angels are immune from all sin: therefore so was the blessed Virgin] (*De conceptione beatae Mariae*, 1664: 250).

Between creation references, Vallmanya intercalates a stanza linking the Virgin Birth and Mary's motherhood to the Immaculate Conception with two stanzas of laudatory epithets in her honour. The second of these is in scholastic style, posing a question based on each epithet, '¿Com fós port segur, si lo maligne / hi fos primer que ·l vostre Fill insigne?' [How could you be a safe harbour, if the evil one was there before your noble Son?] (465, ll.44–45). Comparisons between Mary and other created beings give thematic unity to the poem.

Creation is reworked in an image of God as a builder in Bosch's entry to the 1486 *certamen*: 'Sí com l'obrer, prevent […] / un bell palau'

[If as a workman, planning a beautiful palace] (458, ll.13–14). The description of the Virgin Mary as a construction takes its origin from Ps. 86.5 but the addition of God as an artisan to the ideas in the Psalm originates in the treatise of Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber de celebranda conceptione* (in Talbot 1954: 112). It is taken up by Ramon Llull in his *Disputatio eremitae contra Raymundi aliquibus dubiis quaestionibus Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* [Dispute of the Hermit against Ramon on Some Doubtful Questions on the Sentences of Peter Lombard]:

> Antequam artifex aedificet cameram, finis camerae qui est habitare est conceptus, et postmodum sequitur camera in re, et aliud habitare, quod est actu reale a primo causaliter deductum de potentia in actum; a simili, finis recreationis fuit ante conceptus quam fuit recreatio, et Filius Dei, qui concepit et voluit finem, sic etmulto melius praeparavit et ordinavit omnia pertinentia ad recreationem a principio usque ad finem, sicut bonus artifex praeparat et ordinat materiam camerae a principio usque ad finem: ergo concluditur quod Filius Dei potuerit praeparare materiam recreationis in principio conceptionis quod beata Virgo habuit a suis parentibus. (1729: 89)
>
> [Before the craftsman builds a room, he conceives the purpose of the room which is for inhabiting, and, then, comes the room and, then, living in it. In the same way, the end of the recreation was conceived before the recreation, and the Son of God prepared and ordained everything relating to the recreation from beginning to end, like a good craftsman he prepares and ordains the materials for the room from the beginning to the end: therefore, it is to be concluded that the Son of God could prepare the material for the recreation at the beginning of the conception which the blessed Virgin had from her parents.]

According to Lamy, Llull maintained the twelfth-century tradition of thought on the Immaculate Conception (2000: 335, n.33). His work served as a conduit to bring it into Catalonia and may be the source of the metaphor which Bosch uses. Isabel de Villena also uses it. Villena describes the Virgin Mary's womb as a dwelling-place in the first chapter of her *Vita Christi*: 'en tota la dita terra no havia posada decent per a sa altesa reposar' [in the whole earth there was no respectable dwelling for his Highness to take his rest] (1916–1918: I, 9) and the moves to describing how the builder, God, decides to construct the dwelling. Her use of it is further testimony of its currency in fifteenth-century Valencia (Twomey 2003a).

The creation image is sustained throughout the second stanza of the poem, where Bosch alludes to stainlessness and beauty to echo Song of Songs 4.7, expressing his praise of the Virgin. Allusion to 'tota pulchra

es' is woven into it with 'bella per tot' [beautiful in everything] in apposition to 'mare sua ·ccelent' [his excellent mother]. In the following line, Bosch adds 'tal vos féu' [so he made you], to point to the work of the 'Obrer' [Creator, Artisan], and cements the reference to the Song of Songs through inclusion of 'màcula ni vici / vos han pogut causar defalliment' [neither stain nor vice has been able to cause you to waiver]. The creation image expressed in 'del món fent l'edifici' [building the edifice of the world] is paralleled by the creation of the Virgin 'tal vos féu' [so he made you]:

> Déu, per semblant, del món fent l'edifici,
> primera us véu mare sua ·ccel·lent,
> bella per tot, condign· a son servici;
> y tal vos féu, que màcula ni vici
> vos han pogut causar defalliment. (458, ll.17–21)
>
> [God, seemingly, building the world
> first saw you, excellent Mother,
> beautiful in all things, fitting for his service
> and so you were made, with neither stain nor vice
> able to cause you to waiver.]

The same association of construction and the Song of Songs is found in the treatise by Nicholas of St Albans, which could have been known to Bosch through a series of texts in favour of the Conception in a similar format to the *Brevis compilatio doctrinarum et auctoritatem circa conceptionem BVM factam in culpa originali* [Brief Compilation of Doctrines and Authority on the Conception of the Blessed Virgin in Original Sin] (ACB 2; 26). Jaume Puig i Oliver (1983) argues that the *Brevis compilatio utrum beata et intemerata virgo Maria in peccato originali fuerit concepta* [Brief Compilation on whether the Blessed and Intrepid Virgin was Conceived in Original Sin] (Vat. Lat. 10497) is the second part of the Barcelona Cathedral compilation. It does not contain Nicholas's defence of the doctrine.

As shown, the metaphor of construction is not exceptional in Bosch's poem and many Valencian authors and poets, like García, use it as a way of emphasizing the perfect work of creation undertaken in the Virgin, 'obra tan perfeta' [a perfect work]. Like Bosch, he depicts God as an artisan: 'Obrat ha en vós obra tan perfeta' [he has worked a perfect work in you]. Isabel de Villena may have known Llull's Disputation but she certainly knew the *certamen* poem by García:

Obrat ha en vós obra tan perfeta,
al deute primer, vós, Verge, ·n sou neta,
lo vostre sant cors gens no y és comprés,
preservada fós. Tingués vida pura.
Jamés no gustàs verí de peccat. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 319, ll.12–16)

[He has worked a perfect work in you,
of the first debt, Virgin, you are clean,
your holy body is not held under its jurisdiction,
and was preserved. You have a pure life.
Never did you taste a draught of the poison of sin.]

The Virgin is free from original sin, termed in the poem 'deute primer' [the first debt], her body is not subject to original sin 'gens no y és comprés' [she was never held prisoner by it], for she is preserved from it. García describes sin using the metaphor of a draught of poison, 'verí', which the Virgin never tasted. The Conception and original sin are often described in terms of food and drink in the *certàmens*.

Pre-Election of the Virgin

There are also a number of poems, which, although they contain no direct reference to Mary's Immaculate Conception, take it for granted. They often take as their central premise the predestination of the Virgin to be Mother of God. Lorenç Diamant, a master scribe, in his entry to the 1474 *certamen* points to Mary's being selected for her role before creation: 'Ans res creàs, vos elegí per mare' [Before anything was created, he chose you for his Mother] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 301, l.18). When Mary responds to the entries at the end of the 1474 *certamen*, in a poem written by Fenollar, she is also made to refer to her pre-election as Mother of God and, as in Diamant's poem, pre-election is combined with 'eternalment':

Coronada fuy perfeta
ans que l'ésser meu no fos,
eternalment preeleta
mare de Déu poderós. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 339, ll.5–8)

[I was crowned perfect one
before my being existed,
eternally pre-elected
Mother of Almighty God.]

Diamant is probably suggesting pre-creation reference to Ecclesiasticus 24.9 by 'eternalment', because selection at a time prior to existence is a feature of several entries to the 1474 *certamen*, such as notary Joan Moreno's description of Mary as 'eternalment eleta' (277, l.18), Joan Vidal's more explicit 'sens peccar may eternalment creada' [without sin ever eternally created] (338, l.20), or the 'eternalment prevista' used by Cardona:

> Mare de Déu, eternalment prevista
> tal qual huy sou e per semper sereu,
> que us procrehà, segons que ·ls cels se veu,
> lo Déu inmens d'aquella ·ternal vista. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 271, ll.1–4).
>
> [Mother of God, eternally planned
> as you are now and always will be,
> Immense God procreated you,
> for as he viewed the heavens,
> with his eternal vision.]

'Eternalment prevista' is linked to God's creative activity, through 'procrehà' [procreated], and also to the idea of God's creative vision: '·ternal vista'. When it is combined with 'prevista' [planned] or 'preeleta' [pre-selected] it points to the Virgin's existence before the Fall.

Allusion to Ecclesiasticus is also behind Francí de Castellví's echo of pre-creation in the 1474 *certamen*: 'Amiga de Dios en el siglo creada, / y antes que nasciesses por Dios escogida' [God's beloved created in eternity and chosen by God before you were born] (260, l.11). Castellví uses 'en el siglo' [in saecula, in eternity] rather than 'antes de los siglos'. Once again pre-creation is linked to selection of Mary for her role as Mother of God and it is combined with a Song of Songs reference in 'amiga de Dios'. Because he refers only to Mary's holy birth, Castellví is less definitively immaculist than other entrants to the *certamen* in this poem. 'Antes que nasciesses' could imply maculism rather than immaculism. The key factor moving the poet towards immaculism lies in 'en el siglo creada'. Because the poet intends an Ecclesiasticus reference, this must shift the meaning towards an immaculist viewpoint. Given the presence of a second Conception indicator in 'amiga de Dios', his immaculism is confirmed.

The Pre-Fall Period and Mary's Existence

The concept of Mary's existence prior to the Fall and, therefore, of her escape from corruption by the serpent is developed by a number of fifteenth-century Valencian poets. The association of Mary with the time before the Fall draws again on the opinions formed by the earliest apologists of the Immaculate Conception. Both Pseudo-Peter Comestor and Pseudo-John of Mandeville held that Mary's flesh was one with the untainted flesh of Adam before the Fall (Lamy 2000: 131) and they argued that this was a way of ensuring her preservation from original sin. There are a number of poets who make Mary's pre-Fall existence explicit. Some of them emphasize Mary's perfection. Vallmanya is one of them: 'y ans que·l primer pare ja fósseu perfeta, / abans de la tacha ja fós preeleta' [and, before the first father, you were already perfect, before the Fall you were pre-elected] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 451, ll.15–16). The implication for Vallmanya is that her nature was like Adam's, before he fell from grace. Because she existed prior to the Fall, Vallmanya can assert that she was undefiled by it.

Much the same argument is used by Tallante. In his stanza on the excellence of the Conception in his 'Obra en loor de .XX. excellencias de Nuestra Señora' [Poem in Praise of the Twenty Excellences of Our Lady] (ID1006), he describes Mary's existence before the entry of sin into the world:

> En antes que culpa fuesse causada,
> tu virgen benigna ya yuas delante,
> tan lexos del crimen y del semejante,
> que sola quedaste daquel libertada. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: II, 117, ll.1–4)
>
> [Before sin was caused
> you, kind Virgin, went ahead,
> so distant from sin and from your neighbour,
> that alone you were liberated from it.]

Tallante focuses on the separation of the Virgin from sinful humanity. She is 'lexos' [distant] from other human beings and the same theme is underpinned by the notion of the Virgin being ahead of humanity: 'yuas delante' [went ahead]. Tallante presents her both as a guide or as a leader whose example others can follow and also as the one whose prior redemption secured the redemption of the rest.

Pre-knowledge, rather than pre-election, underpins another pre-Fall reference in Roig's *Espill*. Roig adopts the idea of creation as vision,

from Genesis, and connects pre-knowledge of the existence of the Virgin to it:

> Déu, qui hu sabia,
> tal la volgué, volent pogué
> fer-la tan neta tota perfeta
> i tal prevista ans de la vista
> del nostre crim. (1978: 158)
>
> [God, who knew that
> wanted her thus, and wanting was able
> to make her wholly perfect
> and so planned her before seeing our crime.]

The traditional three-part theological statement about the Conception is compacted into Roig's verses with divine fore-knowledge indicated in 'sabia', the active role of divine will contained in 'volgué', and divine capability to undertake the action of creating the Virgin free from original sin to be noted in 'pogué'. However, Roig also emphasizes the next development in salvation history, which is the Fall, setting Mary outside its effects through reference to her pre-creation.

Divine action in selecting Mary provides an important argument to underpin the Conception as shown in Chapter 4. Vallmanya's second entry to the 1486 poetry competition combines God's action in selecting Mary with a reference to its timing before the Fall:

> Com l'alt Factor vos elegís primera
> que·l primer hom, yo per a mi declare
> ésser forçat creure sou verdadera
> obra d'Aquell qui us formà per cimera,
> pura sens crim perquè li fósseu mare. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 466, ll.78–82)
>
> [As the high Creator chose you first
> before the first man, may I for myself declare
> I am forced to believe that you are a true work
> of Him who formed you pure without sin
> as a chimera (battle token) so that you could be (his) Mother.]

Vallmanya uses a number of elements to anchor God's action to the creation period. He points to it through his reference to the first man as well as to the 'Factor' [Creator]. Pre-creation and divine action is recalled a few lines later in 'obra' and 'us formà' which combine with a reference to the Virgin's sinless nature: 'obra d'Aquel qui us formà per cimera / pura sens crim' [work of Him who formed you as a chimera pure without sin]. Vallmanya may call the Virgin 'cimera', a mythical

monster, part-goat, part-lion, and part-serpent, because he considers her to be the last of the Old Testament faithful, *anawim*, as well as first of the New Testament fellowship. He may also use it to suggest she springs from a sinful nature, or thorn but she herself was the flower, completely pure and without sin. It also gives him the opportunity to display highly valued Renaissance knowledge of the Ancient World.[12]

Poets use a range of synonyms to refer to the Fall and to the introduction of evil into the world. Balaguer, writing for the 1486 *certamen*, refers to evil as a plague which comes into the world through the actions of the serpent: 'Puix Déu, ponint primer la serp que l'home, / vos féu salut ans que ·ns donàs la plaga' [so God putting the serpent ahead of man, accorded you salvation before he gave us the plague] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 518, ll.11–12). He associates the Virgin with 'health' or 'salvation', the Valencian word is the same for both and, like Roig, who termed sin a physical impairment (see Chapter 6), he marks the Virgin Mary's existence before the Fall, associating it with the plague, which ravaged Valencia in successive years in the late fifteenth century. The use of plague for original sin marks it as both a physical and spiritual illness, and as Solomon argues, women were thought to be agents of the spread of disease (1997: 90–108). In Balaguer's lines, the concept of health precedes sickness. His structure reflects the way in which Man lived in unity with God before the Fall. Balaguer uses a chiasmic pattern to place evil before good in the case of Adam, 'serp' / 'home', and, in the following line, good before evil in the case of the New Eve, 'salut' / 'plaga'.

Pre-Fall imagery, sickness, and Conception context are combined by Genís Fira, a Cathedral canon both at Valencia and Cartagena. Fira was secretary to Pope Alexander VI, one of the Borjas from Gandia. In his poem submitted to the 1474 *certamen*, Fira sets the sickness, spread through the world because of Adam's sin, after Mary's selection for her role, thus alluding to her existence before sin came into the world and exempting her from sin:

> Ans que peccant, general malaltia
> pél món sembràs lo nostre primer pare,
> en lo més alt de l'alta gararxia,
> bella per tot, humil verge Maria,
> Déu infinit vos elegí per mare. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 293, ll.1–5)

[12] He may also use it as a device, used in battle or jousting on a helmet or a coat of arms, see Chapter 5.

[Before our first father, sinning sowed,
universal sickness through the world
at the highest point of the high hierarchy
Infinite God chose you as his Mother
beautiful in every way, humble Virgin Mary.]

Mary's existence before the Fall is the focus of Fenollar's winning poem in the 1486 *certamen*: 'Ja los grans rius de vostres béns corrien / ans que ·ls parents vençuts fossen en guerra' [The great rivers of your goodness ran before the parents were defeated in war] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 491, ll.1–2). The war he describes is the battle between the serpent and Adam and Eve, leading to their defeat. The reference to 'los grans rius' [great rivers] points to the Virgin's fullness of grace, and her role as *Mediatrix* of grace, as well as separation from the rest of defeated mankind.

Although there is no apparent reference to Mary's creation in these final examples, connection can be made with pre-creation imagery. Mary's existence before the Fall has the same function as that of her pre-creation: to establish her connection with the unsullied flesh of the original creation. By referring to the period before the Fall, poets intend to place Mary's selection before the time when sin entered the world. Original creation and humanity fell from grace, but Mary, created before the world, or before the Fall of the original creation, is beyond the taint of the world or the flesh. Mary's pre-Fall existence becomes an essential element of support for the Conception doctrine. It is found in the *certamen* to celebrate the declaration made about the doctrine at Basle:

E com obrant en eleció pura
de tot agent la fi principal sia,
ans fon elet l'Om qui Déu ser avia
que tot quant fon de qualsevol natura.
E, sens migà, la mare que fonc sua,
aprés del Fil déc ésser preeleta,
ans que Adam ne la ley a ·quel feta.
Per tant lo crim, de bens no la féu nua. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 113, ll.9–16)

[And, as though acting through pure choice
the principal aim of anything being done,
first the Man who was to be God was chosen
before anything of any nature.
And, without half measures, the mother who was his
had to be chosen, after her Son,

before Adam or the law made for him.
So sin, did not strip her of goodness.]

The poet shows a tiered pre-creation image, underlining the primacy of Christ. First, Christ was selected and 'fon elet l'Om qui Déu ser devia' and, in second place, the Virgin Mary was chosen: 'la mare que fonc sua / aprés del Fil déc ésser preeleta'. The pre-selection carefully places the Virgin in her correct status in the hierarchy, below Christ, who did not need redemption, but above all other mortals. This selection of Christ and his Mother took place before the Fall: 'ans que Adam ne la ley a ·quel feta'. In addition, the entire opening stanza of the poem depicts the Almighty contemplating the work of creation to be carried out:

Fermant los ulls alt en l'amor eterna,
l'enteniment, si gràcia l'afina,
a dir lo ver de la mare divina,
dins lo Volum qui tot quant és guoverna,
veurà molt clar com l'alta genitura
per Creador l'Om exalsar devia,
en tant qu·ab Ell un supòsit seria
causa final de tota sa factura. (ll.1–8)

[With eyes closed, high in eternal love,
understanding, if grace tempers it,
to tell true of the divine mother,
in the Vastness ruling over everything there is,
will see clearly how noble procreation through the Creator
was to exalt Man,
in so far as with Him a separate substance would be
final cause of all his work of creation.]

The poet begins by describing the actions of the Creator and the task of creation to be brought to perfection in his redemptive work: 'causa final de tota sa factura'. As in the *Glosa* to Gómez Manrique's poem (see above, pp. 191–192), the Virgin Mary was present in the 'enteniment' of the Creator and was part of the divine plan from the beginning. This included how human nature was to be exalted and how the Saviour was to be generated by the procreative act of the Creator. 'Genitura' recalls the Protoevangelium text 'Inimicitas ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius' (Ferrando Francés 1983: 114, n.5). It could be argued that 'ans que' would set up the resonance to Proverbs 8.23 without its needing to be used.

Pre-creation imagery is found throughout the period in Valencia, as this chapter has shown, and it has also discerned a small number of

examples in Castilian poetry. The existence of pre-creation images in a possible entry to the 1440 *certamen* shows consistency over many years. It has been argued that the *certamen* poems are of little poetic interest or value. Ferrando Francés comments on the 'aclaparadora monotonia' [unremitting monotony] of the collection, and on the 'monotonia de les variacions sobre el mateix tema' [monotony of the variants on the same theme] (1983: 220). Yet, pre-creation images cannot be considered stock phrases. In order to fully understand their purpose, it is necessary to understand that they constituted one of the key biblical authorities for the doctrine and, as such, had to be given a place within any poem seeking to defend it.

Pre-creation Allusion with no Explicit Reference to the Conception

In this chapter, I have examined a number of pre-creation images in immaculist contexts. Now the question must be raised as to whether the use of a pre-creation image, without explicit reference to sinlessness and without an explicit declaration of immaculist intent, constitutes reference to the Immaculate Conception. This contention will be examined with regard to some of the *cancionero* poets.

A case in point is how Santillana, in the eleventh stanza of 'Los goços de Nuestra Señora' [Joys of Our Lady] (ID 0322), uses 'desde *ab iniçio* creada' [created from the beginning], in a poem in which there is no other reference to the Conception doctrine (2003: 578, l.88). By the time Santillana wrote his Joys poem, there was a developing tradition of including the Conception and dedicating a stanza to it.[13] Santillana does not make any reference to it, even though in his version he includes twelve Joys.[14] In the eleventh stanza, where he deals with the Joy of Pentecost, he uses terms which have been associated in other poets with the reception of grace at the Conception. Thus, Mary 'con-

[13] Villasandino in 'Generosa muy fermosa' (ID1147), for example, has an introductory stanza leading into Mary's first *gozo*, which deals with the Annunciation. The introductory stanza refers obliquely to the Immaculate Conception, whilst the final stanza of the poem makes the references explicit. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán opens his Joys poem with the Conception.

[14] The *gozos* addressed by Santillana are the Conception of Christ, the Visitation, the Virgin Birth, the Epiphany, the Presentation, the Flight to Egypt, the Visit to the Temple, the Wedding at Cana, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, and the Assumption / Coronation.

solada e favorida' by the reception of the Spirit, 'resplandor santo', is described as created 'desde *ab iniçio*'. It is possible to assume that the use of the phrase is a shorthand way of marking out Mary's special role and her preparation for it. Since it is regularly used in a Conception context in fifteenth-century Castilian and, in a more amplified form, in Catalan poetry, it could be taken as an oblique reference to Mary's pre-creation and to the way Pentecost marks her pre-reception of sanctifying grace at her Conception. It might be that Santillana wished to underpin his Joys poem with references to Mary's immaculate nature without assigning a stanza to her Conception. However, its position in the Joys urges caution.

To this oblique reference could be added two others in the same Joys poem. In the first stanza, 'elegido por Dios Padre' [chosen by God the Father], which has been linked consistently with creation images and, in the second stanza, 'pulcra e decóra' [beautiful and lovely] (574, l.4, 575, l.16) relate pre-election of the Virgin to her perfect beauty, another way of alluding to her perfect and unsullied nature. The theme of beauty (see Chapter 7) is linked to the Immaculate Conception in many poems, although on its own it is not a sufficient indicator of it. It is defined in the *Glosa* on Gómez Manrique's 'Loores e suplicaciones' [Praises and Supplications] (ID 3400) (2003: 292).

Where other *cancionero* poets use pre-creation references, they are equally elusive. Tapia was a poet whose work appears in the *CG* but about whom nothing is known except that he dedicated poems to a number of important nobles in the late fifteenth century including the Dukes of Alba and of Medinaceli. Tapia's '*Salve Regina*' (ID6072 V7483), a reworking of the Latin acclamation, in the first stanza advocates Mary's pre-election: 'abinicio establecida / de dios padre elegida' [established from the beginning, selected by God the Father] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 155, ll.3–4), which can be interpreted as signifying the Conception. He uses a construction image in a glossed poem (ID 1052 G1051), referring to the time before the Fall, through which he asserts that Mary is founded from the beginning and also selected. Both 'sanctificada' and 'consagrada' combine to suggest her preservation from sin:

> Pues casa santificada[15]
> do mi espiritu recrea

[15] *Sanctificatio in utero* is the term used by theologians to express the purification of the Virgin from original sin in her mother's womb.

de mano de dios labrada
llamandote consagrada

[So sanctified house
where my spirit rests
built by the hand of God
naming you sacred.]

In this poem the building image, in conjunction with 'casa santificada' [sanctified house] (ll.41–43) is probably to be determined as immaculist. As discussed above, Catalan poetry of the same period uses construction images to point to Mary's selection for her role. It is also to be noted that construction images occur in Nogarolis's office, with which Tapia may have been familiar (BC 1043, fol. 16^{v}).[16] Tapia's image of construction of a house for God, already allied in other poems with the Immaculate Conception, could recall the delightful shade of Song of Songs 2.3 in 'do mi espiritu recrea' [where my spirit rests]. It could also recall the psalmist's longing to be in the house of God (Ps. 84.1–2).

Núñez's 'Villancico hecho a Nuestra Señora la noche de Navidad' [Carol for Our Lady on Christmas Night] (ID 6074 E6073) (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 156) provides a third example of pre-creation reference used in a Castilian poem dedicated to another theme, Christmas. The carol consists of a dialogue between humanity and the Virgin. She is described as 'el templo y morada / do todo nuestro bien mora' [temple and dwelling, where our well-being resides] (ll.65–66), a biblical prefiguration allied to that of construction. Núñez evokes the construction of the temple from 1 Kings 6 in which the preparation of the materials provide many parallels for the preparation of the Virgin's body to receive Christ. Parallels can be drawn between the preparation of the temple to receive the Ark of the Covenant (6.19) and the Virgin, who was to be a New Testament Holy of Holies. In the same stanza, epithets about the Virgin include 'de *ante secula* criada' (l.68), preserving the original Latin, 'ante saecula' from Ecclesiasticus. It would seem to be the case that Núñez is taking a well-known allusion to the Conception to affirm the Virgin's pre-creation for her role.

In the following stanza, Núñez puts the words 'yo soy aquel santo templo' [I am that temple] (l.73) into the mouth of the Virgin. She affirms the pre-creation image in the words 'que el quiso sanctificar' [which he wished to sanctify] (l.74). If *ab initio* and *ante secula* can be

[16] One example is the response used after the ninth lesson: 'Domus quam cupio edificare magna est' [the house which I desire to build is great].

used as a shorthand form of expressing belief in the Conception, then 'quiso sanctificar' can be read in the same way. 'Quiso' shows the divine will in action as a single element of the Pseudo-Anselmian defence of the doctrine. 'Sanctificar' is more difficult to interpret. According to the author of the gloss on 'Loores e suplicaciones' [Praises and Supplications], it was believed that 'sanctificar' was used only for the anti-immaculist viewpoint:

> Sanctificada. Esta palabra paresçe contradezir al segundo pie de la quarta copla, do dize: 'sin pecado conçebida', porque santificaçión presupone culpa. Entiéndase porque en esta material ay dos oppiniones famosas: la vna que Nuestra Señora en su conçebimiento fue preseruada del pecado original; segunt esta opinión, no fue santificada. La otra opinión dize que fue conçebida en pecado original, e segunt esta opinion fue santificada d'él para ser madre de Dios. El autor como discreto e letrado, no se determinó, sino tocolas ambas a dos oppiniones, cada vna en su lugar, por no causar contradición. (Foulché-Delbosc 1915: II, 149; Manrique 2003: 293).
>
> [Sanctified. This word seems to contradict the second line in the fourth stanza, where it says: conceived without sin, because santification presupposes sin. It should be understood that there are two famous opinions on this subject. One says that Our Lady in her conception was preserved from original sin, and, according to this view, she was not sanctified. The other says that she was conceived in original sin, and, according to this view, she was sanctified by him as Mother of God. The author, discreet and a man of letters, does not decide either way, but mentions each in its place, so as not to cause offence.]

In Gómez Manrique's poem, as in Núñez's, the interpretation of 'santificar' has a clear bearing on their position in the immaculist debate. It seems that to ears sensitized to the nuances of the debate in the period, the word sanctify could have no other meaning but the Dominican position of *sanctificatio in utero*. There are various possible hypotheses. I could conclude with the support of the author of the gloss to Gómez Manrique's poem that the Castilian poet was also seeking to please all sides in the debate. It could also be the case that Castilian poets were less well versed in doctrinal arguments than their Catalan counterparts and that this was such a well-accepted idea that even the *certamen* poet writing in Castilian paid lip-service to it. It may even be that they supported the Dominican viewpoint and were maculists. There are grounds for taking the gloss at face value, and evidence like the Franciscan fray Íñigo de Mendoza's decision to remove references to the Conception in his *Vita Christi* could seem to support doing so: 'Dexa

de hablar de la concepcion por no hazer cosquillas a nadie' (1968: 383). However, I believe that the situation is more complex.

Before any decision is reached as to whether Gómez Manrique, and, by extension, Núñez, intended to keep their options open on sanctification and preservation, an example of the use of 'santificar' from Catalan poetry should be taken into account. Berthomeu Salvador, a Law student, and, by 1524, a doctor in civil and canon law, uses 'santificada' in his entry for the 1474 *certamen*: 'Per Déu eternal fós santificada / ans no creàs l'om ni Eva peccàs' [by eternal God you were sanctified, before man was created and Eve sinned] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 305, l.29). Any interpretation of how sanctified is used must take account the local context in the kingdom of Aragon, where teaching against Immaculate Conception was banned as heretical. It would have been impossible for a poet writing in Aragon to argue in favour of sanctification, so it must be concluded that 'santificar' had a wider range of meanings than understood by the author of the gloss, and did not raise any eyebrows, when used in 1474 to refer to Mary's sanctification before creation.

There is one major difference between the usage of 'ans dels segles' in Catalan poems and 'de *ante secula*' in Núñez's. In Catalan poems, pre-creation references are underpinned in the poem with other arguments in favour of the Immaculate Conception. In Núñez's *villancico*, any reference to the immaculist theme must be inferred. 'De *ante secula* criada' may be enough to determine Núñez's intention but any conclusion can be no more than speculation, especially given the doubt centring on how 'santificada' should be interpreted.

Conclusion

Alfonso's association of the Virgin with Wisdom in the thirteenth century shows that fifteenth-century poets were making use of a prefiguration with a long tradition. It is immediately apparent from the high incidence of creation and pre-creation images in immaculist poems in both Castile and Aragon that the poets considered the theme to be closely allied to or synonymous with the Virgin's immaculate nature. This cross-referencing has to a great extent been lost to the modern reader and the main purpose of this chapter has been to reconstruct it, so the poems can be better interpreted. Analysis of pre-creation in Castile and Aragon has shown that Valencian poets favoured Proverbs

8.23, 'ans qu·el món fos creat' or 'ans que l'abís'. The text is usually amplified, and may be linked to Mary's preservation from sin before the creation, or to her pre-election for her role in the history of salvation. In Castile, there is a smaller body of immaculist poems to study, but if poems are interpreted in the light of a consistent alliance of pre-creation with immaculism in the period, it can be argued that poets intend such references to be immaculist. Study of the poems entered for immaculist *certàmens* permits cautious conclusions to be reached about the use of equivalent biblical allusion where it is found in other poems not dedicated to the Conception doctrine.

It has again become apparent that late fifteenth-century Valencian poets offer greater doctrinal allusion and more interweaving of themes than the Castilians, because they were writing for a different, overtly immaculist purpose, in a different context, in a country with marked clerical and royal support for the doctrine. There is a difference in treatment between these overtly immaculist poems and the ones to be found in the *CB* and other *cancionero* collections.

As has been noted, several poets mix terminology of both preservation and sanctification, even, in the case of Gómez Manrique, within the same poem. This mix can be found in early Conception liturgy too (see, for example, the fourteenth-century Gerona breviary [ACG 125], where the first office is called *sanctificatio conceptionis*).

The high incidence of references to the Virgin's pre-creation can lead to the conclusion that the accusation levelled at many *certamen* poets for using trite vocabulary and stock phrases is justified. Critical disparagement appears valid, until two points are considered. First, pre-creation is based on some of the few scriptural supports for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and, as such, was justifiably given a place in poetic renderings of the doctrine. Therefore, since the theme is one of the key authoritative references for the doctrine, its inclusion has less to do with repetitiveness and more to do with doctrinal referencing. Second, in the better poems in the *certamen* collections, it is certainly the case that pre-creation references are combined in various ways with other immaculist themes.

Mary's close association with the Woman of Genesis and with Wisdom, the semi-deity present at creation, links her closely with the time before the Fall and is central to understanding how she came to be paralleled with Eve. Mary is the new creation, whilst Eve was the old, and the way in which the two women and their role in salvation history are envisaged by poets is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

THE NEW EVE

In the previous chapter, I established that references to Mary's creation before the time of the Fall are essential Conception signifiers in the fifteenth-century. I will now examine the comparison between Eve and Mary to see how it contributed to deepening understanding of Mary's nature.

From the very earliest period of Christian reflection, theologians began to compare Mary's actions and nature with Eve's.[1] The two women, who take their place in salvation history, one at the beginning of the Old Testament and the other at the beginning of the New, seemed, in their view, to embody humanity in its capacity for sin and for redemption. The confrontation between Mary and the serpent, which was central to understanding of the Conception doctrine, stemmed from collusion between Eve and the serpent in the Genesis story, already examined in Chapter 5, and led to the development of a contrast between the women's responses to the serpent's wiles. For this reason, Eve's presence in the creation story led to Mary's being described as present at creation too and to her going beyond the role of Eve to active participation because she was associated with Wisdom and her actions were interpreted as prefigured by Wisdom's. Eve, however, like Wisdom, has been interpreted as the Creator-Goddess deposed and this provides another point of departure for the contrast between the two women. John A. Phillips argues that the 'most important characteristic of the New Eve is her virgin motherhood' and that 'it is the combination of these two apparently mutually exclusive states in one unique being that is both cause and effect of Eve's restored relationship to God' (1984: 3, 140).

Reflection on texts from Genesis, especially the narrative of the Temptation and the Fall, have been seen as of paramount importance in the development of theologians' and philosophers' moral attitudes to women (Lucas 1983: 3; Archer 2001: 73–90; Flood 2002: 33). When they

[1] Theologians include Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome (Graef 1963–1965: I, 38–41, 83, 94). See also Archer (2001: 76–86).

discussed the description of creation in Genesis, theologians reflected on whether image and likeness were the same thing or whether Eve was just created in the image of Adam and not in that of God:

> Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in the likeness of ourselves' […]. So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (1.26)

The differentiation of man and woman which early theologians discerned in the creation story, was reinforced by the etymology of St Isidore of Seville, who linked man, 'vir', to courage, 'virtus', and woman, 'mulier', to 'mollis' [soft]. Angela M. Lucas (1983: 5) cites the comparison as 'vis' [strength]. The infusion of interpretation of Genesis into Aristotelian rationale for sex polarity led medieval theologians like Albert the Great to consider women less perfectly ordered, weaker in strength, inconstant in ideas, with an appetite moving towards evil (Allen 1985: I, 362–363).

The highly developed antitheses between Mary's actions and Eve's provided mariological and misogynist reflection (see, for example, Bloch 1991, Cantavella 1992: 117–122, Pelikan 1996: 44, Archer 2001: 26–30). Its representation in art has been studied by Ernst Guldan (1966: 117–154). Isidore devised etymological interpretations of her name to reinforce her guilt: 'Eva interpretatur *vita*, sive *calamitas*, sive *vae*: *vita* quia origo fuit nascendi; *calamitas* et *vae*, quia prevaricatione causa exstitit moriendi' [Eve means life or disaster or woe; life because she was the origin of being born; disaster or woe because, through transgression, she became the cause of dying] (Lib.VII, cap. 6, 5, PL 32, col. 275; 1982: I, 652). The Fall led to toil, tribulation, sin, and death for her descendants but also to her subjugation under the authority of Adam.

Medieval theologians developed new variations on the same theme. Peter Abelard, in his sermon on the Assumption created a new reversal of roles. Eve's action marked the beginning of separation from God. Mary's action marked the beginning of humanity's salvation. Eve was the Mother of toil and woe. Mary was the Mother of joy and salvation. Eve was the imperfect female, representative of the old nature, on whose shoulders blame for the Fall must be laid. From Adam's side was created Eve, but Mary engendered the New Adam: 'De veteri Adam creata est Evam; novus autem Adam et veteris Redemptor generatur ex Maria' [Eve was created from the Old Adam; but the New Adam and Redeemer of the Old was engendered of Mary] (*Sermo* 26, *In*

assumptione Beatae Mariae, PL178, col. 542). For St Anselm, Mary was a source of well-being and of blessing, and Eve was a source of sin (*Cur Deus homo*, II.8), whilst St Bernard considered that, since both sexes had sinned, it was right for both to have a place in the scheme of redemption, so the New Adam takes the place of the old and Mary takes the place of Eve (Lucas 1983: 15–16). Christ, the New Adam, redresses the sin of the first who was tempted by Eve. The parallel between Eve and Mary links the latter with the story of the Fall in Genesis 3.15 but it also acknowledges Mary's role in redemption. Mary, the New Eve, establishes the true humanity of Christ (Pelikan 1996: 39–51), because she is the true gauge of his human nature, but, at the same time, her consent at the Annunciation sets both Christ and herself in a relationship of enmity to an age-old foe, the serpent, Satan, or the Devil.

The antithesis of Eve and Mary and the parallel between Christ and Adam are already visible in the letters of St Paul (Pelikan 1996: 15, Royo Marín 1997: 51). Mary was representative of what human beings in partnership with the divine could achieve.

In a period like the Middle Ages, in which Eve shouldered greater responsibility for the Fall and for leading Adam astray, Mary's responsibility sharply increased.[2] The prophecy about the Woman's descendants, who are to crush the serpent, became a prefiguration of Mary's role in salvation (see Chapter 5).

The palindrome Eva-Ave counterpoints the angelic greeting and Eve's name. The reversal is one of the earliest and most ingenious Marian themes, first used by Irenaeus:

> Consequentur autem et Maria virgo obediens invenitur […] Eva vero inobediens: non obedivit enim, adhuc cum esset virgo […] inobediens facta, et sibi, et universo generi humano causa facta est mortis; […] Soc autem et Evae inobedientiae nodus solutionem accepit per obedientiam Mariae. Quod enim alligavit Virgo Eva per incredulitatem, hoc virgo Maria solvit per fidem. (*Contra haereses*, Lib.3, c.22, 4, PG 7, cols 958–959).
>
> [In accordance with this design, Mary the virgin is found obedient […] but Eve was disobedient for she did not obey when as yet she was a virgin. Eve […] having become disobedient was made the cause of death, both for herself and the entire human race […]. The knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the

[2] Archer indicates that there had always been a line of thought attributing a part of the responsibility for the Fall to Adam but that the influence of the tradition attributing it to Eve was stronger (1997: 25).

> virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith.]

The comparison between Eve and Mary quickly became tripartite: Eva-vae-Ave. The wordplay neatly sums up the way in which Eve brought sorrow, sin, and death upon humanity and how sorrow, vae, turned to joy and salvation at the Ave spoken to Mary. It could be thought, as understanding of Mary's characteristics and nature developed, that Eve's sin would also be reversed by Mary's exemption from original sin in the Immaculate Conception and that the Eve-Mary parallel might be read as a Conception signifier in the fifteenth century.

Eve-Mary Parallels in Liturgy

The comparison between Eve and Mary is evident in Conception offices, although it is not found everywhere in the Peninsula. A comparison between Eve's compliance and Mary's struggle with the serpent is used as an antiphon at the first night prayer in a cluster of Castilian offices: 'Cum eua obediuit hec serpentis caput triuit iugum spernens nupciarium deo uouit celibatum' [When Eve obeyed, she broke the serpent's head, spurning marriage, she vowed celibacy to God].[3] The only breviary outside Castile-Leon to use the antiphon is the Seu d'Urgell incunable where the antiphon appears at the same point (ACSU 147, fol. 313^{v}). The parallel centres on the axis of obedience to the serpent or to God. Contrast is between the vow of celibacy which Mary traditionally made as part of her dedication to the temple in the Apocryphal Gospels (see Chapter 10), a reflection of her obedience to God's will, and Eve's failure to keep her promise to obey God and not eat from the tree in the garden. Its second axis is that of sexual sin. Eve's compliance implies the carnal knowledge obtained, long considered the result of eating the fruit, whereas Mary's meant celibacy.

[3] Offices from Toledo, Segovia, Calahorra, and El Burgo de Osma all use the antiphon just before the first reading from the miracle story of Helsin: *Varia spiritualia* (Montserrat 830), fol. 109^{r}; *Breviario romano y suplemento al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN Res. 186), fol. 424^{r}; *Breviario de Toledo adaptado al uso del convento de Uclés* (BN 8902), fol. 426^{r}; *Breviario romano adaptado al uso de la Órden de los Jerónimos* (BN 9082), fol. 716^{v}; *Breviario de Toledo* (BB 2), fol. 483^{v}; *Breviario de Segovia* (ACS B288), fol. 310^{v}; *Breviarium secundum consuetudinem ecclesie segobiensis* (ACS B272), fol. 171^{r}; *Breviario de Calahorra* (ACC), 17, fol. 11^{v}; *Breviario de Calahorra* (ACC 18), fol. 15^{v}; *Breviario de Osma* (ACBO 2B), fol. 482^{r}.

The Lerida breviary presents an Eve-Mary parallel at the same position at first night prayer, although Mary is not named: 'Principium nostri luctus eua fuit Anne fructus huius finis' (ACLl 16, fol. 436[r]) [The beginning of our sorrow was Eve, the fruit of Anne its end]. The contrast between them centres on the 'luctus' [sorrow] of humanity and its time-scale. The fact that Mary is named only as 'fructus' [fruit] of Anne means that she usurps the place of Christ as the end of sorrow.

In the Rodà breviary, an Eve-Mary parallel is found at lauds: 'Paradisi porta per eua[m] cuntis clausa est. Et per maria uirgine[m] iterum patefacta est in eternum' (ACLl Rc-0026, fol. 440[r]) [The door of Paradise was closed by Eve and, by Mary the Virgin, it was opened again in perpetuity]. The contrast between the two focuses on the exile of Eve from Paradise because of her disobedience to God's command, whilst Mary holds the key to reopen heaven because of her assent. The parallel contrasts Eve who sinned and Mary who did not.

The opening and closing of Paradise was also a feature of *O Gloriosa domina* [O glorious Lady], the hymn used at lauds in most Peninsular Marian offices, including the Conception (see, for example, *Breviarium franciscanum* [BN Vitr 21–6], fol. 354[v]):

> Quod Eva tristis abstulit,
> Tu reddis almo germine,
> Intrent ut astra flebiles,
> Coeli fenestra facta es.
>
> [What sorrowful Eve took from us,
> you give back with your sweet seed
> that the tearful might enter like stars,
> you are made the window of heaven.] (*AH*, II, 39)

In this stanza from a hymn repeated daily in the office of the Virgin as well as at all major feasts, Eve's actions, implicitly her disobedience, led to the barring of her descendants from Paradise. By implication, it deprived humanity of its filial rights. Those of Mary, allied to obedience at the Incarnation, led to the opening of heaven for sinful humanity. Her reinstating of humanity's privileges depends on a new filial relationship.

The Eve-Mary parallel was probably best mediated through its presence in the *Ave maris stella*, the hymn used at vespers for all Marian feasts and found in every breviary in the Peninsula (Twomey 2005):[4]

[4] Josef Szövérffy discusses the cosmological aspects of the description of Mary in this hymn (1985: 14–15).

> Summens illud Ave
> Gabrielis ore
> Funda nos in pace
> Mutans Evae nomen.
>
> [That Ave issuing
> from Gabriel's mouth,
> enfold us in peace
> changing Eve's name.]

The greeting, Ave, accorded to the New Eve, Mary, permanently reverses the name of Eve, showing how the Incarnation reversed the Fall, bringing peace into the world.

The parallel between Eve's disobedience and Mary's obedience continued to find a place in liturgies for Conception feasts. Bouman cites a collect used in missals in France and England. The same text is found as a prayer at vespers offices in the Peninsula:

> Deus ineffabilis misericordie qui prime piaculam mulieris per uirginem expiandam sanxisti. da nobis quesumus conceptionis eius digne solemnia venerari que unigenitum tuum uirgo concepit et virgo peperit dominum nostrum ihesum christum. (See, for example, *Varia spiritualia* [Montserrat 830], fol. 109[r])
>
> [Ineffable God of mercy who sanctified the crime of the first woman to be expiated by the Virgin. Grant us, we beseech, that the feast of the Conception of the one who, being a virgin, be worthily celebrated conceived and bore our Lord Jesus Christ.]

The 'real comparison is between Mary who conceived and bore her Son, whilst she was a virgin, whilst Eve fell into sin whilst she was a virgin'. Motherhood is at the heart of Mary's contribution but it is predicated upon the close 'connection between Mary's purity from sin (i.e. her personal sanctity and her sanctification) and her spotless virginity as the Mother of God' (Bouman 1958: 142) and, consequently, on Eve's succumbing to the sins of the flesh.

A Calahorra missal from the mid sixteenth-century provides an Eve-Mary parallel from the Conception mass: 'Celebris dies colitur in qua virgo co[n]cipitur que per obedentiam mu[n]do refudit gratia[m]: vt quod ruti per eua[m]: releuetur per mariam' [The important day is to be celebrated in which the Virgin was conceived and, through obedience, brought grace back to the world: so that, what was broken by Eve, should be lifted high again through Mary] (ACC *Missale* 1554, fol. 236[r]).[5]

[5] The front page of the missal has the inscription: 'In nomine sanctissime trinitatis

It is essential to determine whether the presence of the Eve-Mary parallel in Conception offices means that it should be interpreted as signifying defence of the doctrine, wherever it is found. It could also be considered that it is merely transferred to immaculist meaning because of its combination with other signifiers.

The Eve-Mary Parallel in Immaculist Writing

Comparison of Mary with her foremother is an important strand of the writing of Roig, who elects to use Eva-vae-Ave in an immaculist context. Roig interprets the name of Eve as 'mal goig, / maledicció, perdició, / remor d'ossos, boca e mossos, / plor' (1978: 152).[6] The central purpose in the comparison 'sens ve' [without woe] is to serve as a synonym for 'sens màcula' [without blemish] and the replacement allows Roig not only to draw on allusion to the Song of Songs verse *et macula non est in te* but also to point to the contrast between Eve's sin and Mary's sinlessness. By his allusion to 'la tota neta' [the wholly clean], 'la tota bella' [the wholly beautiful], and 'mare i amiga' [mother and beloved] in the three subsequent lines, allusion to the Song of Songs is confirmed and strengthened. He crystallizes the antithesis of Mary and fallen womankind. She is 'sens ve', whereas all others are tainted by that woe which has afflicted humanity since the Fall. As well as drawing on the traditional Latin wordplay, Roig combines the term with a reference to the Virgin's purity in 'La sens "ve!" pura' [the pure one without woe] (1978: 159) and ensures it is revitalized with immaculist overtones. It follows directly on a colourful image in which Mary is described as pure gold, a biblical reference also reinterpreted in an immaculist sense (see Chapter 6).

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missale secundum consuetudinem Calagurritanis et Caciatensis ecclesiarum' [In the name of the Holy Trinity according to the custom of the churches of Calahorra and the Pilgrim Way] and the back flyleaf indicates the date of printing, that it was printed in Lyon, and at the order of Juan Bernardino de Luz, Bishop of Calahorra and La Calzada.

[6] Cantavella believes his interpretation is modelled on St Isidore's (1992: 119), however, the principal axis of St Isidore's interpretation is that it is at the same time positive and negative: 'vita, sive calamitas, sive vae' [life, or calamity, or woe]. Isidore's initially positive interpretation for the name Eve is far removed from Roig's completely negative one.

Roig begins his comparison by associating it with the eagle of Patmos, which cried 've' [woe] three times. The allusion foregrounds the heavenly conflict between the Woman and the dragon (see Chapter 5), since Patmos is where St John received his vision. At the Annunciation, Mary is addressed with the words 'Ave' and Roig points to the way in which the greeting reverses the Fall, 'capgirant Eva' [turning Eve about], signifying that the Virgin is the New Eve. It also marks deliverance from woe, which can be interpreted as sin, death, or the pains of childbirth, all of which have characterized the lot of women since the Fall. It is here, I believe, that the explanation for Roig's choice of the tripartite comparison hinges. In the *Espill*, he is at pains to show the effects that the Fall has on the lives of the women he portrays. The protagonist's wives are described enduring childbirth, or, as unnatural women, seeking to avoid it. Women are portrayed committing a range of sins. They procure death and are punished for their sin by receiving it. The sinful nature of women is highlighted and contrasted with Mary's. Like Eve, the women the protagonist describes stand accused of leading men astray. The protagonist's search for a perfect wife, and his review of various types of woman, leads him to observe and experience the sins which such women commit. He is brought down by the sin of desiring them and his constant desire to find a wife. He argues that only one woman is worthy of regard and that is the Virgin.

Roig's recounting of elements of the Genesis story in his *Espill* alludes to the role of the serpent, but he reinforces the nature of Eve's complicity rather than pointing to the battle between it and the Virgin. He refers to Eve's subjugation to establish how the results of the Fall meant a heavy penalty for her:

> Com sa error
> no confessàs, ans la scusàs
> ab la serpent, eternalment
> fon condempnada a mort, dampnada,
> e maleïda tota la vida
> ser subjugada e bandejada
> de paraís. (1978: 153)
>
> [Since she did not confess her error
> but rather excused it
> she was condemned to death, damned,
> eternally, with the serpent,
> and cursed all her life
> to be subjugated and banned
> from Paradise.]

Roig points to Eve's lack of repentance for her role. In the final stanzas, he places enormous emphasis on repentance for sins committed and on the possibility of salvation, indicating that the lack of repentance of the narrator was the root of his constant falling into unsuitable marriages. Roig uses the excuse Eve gives in the Genesis story (3.13) to conclude that she never repented of her sin.[7] He insists that Eve will not only be condemned to death, but her punishment is multifaceted. She is damned, but also placed in subjugation, and turned out of Paradise. Because Eve refuses to ask for forgiveness, her crime is more heinous. Following the disobedience of Eve in Eden, Roig develops a long diatribe about women and their inheritance from her, finally re-evoking Genesis to accompany the section on women with one in praise of the Virgin.

Early Marian Poetry and the Eve-Mary Parallel

Since the Eva-vae-Ave wordplay was much used in earlier Hispanic writing on the Virgin, it will be possible to see whether it differs from when it appears in the *Espill*. One of the many examples of it, in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso the Wise, sets out an axis of foolish and wise behaviour and uses the contrast between the folly of Eve and the conduct of the Virgin, to emphasize the importance of the Incarnation:

> Salve-te Deus, ca nos disti
>
> […] o seu Fillo que trouxisti,
>
> […] e con el nos remiisti
> da mui gran loucura
> que fez Eva, e vencisti
> o que nos vencia. (1959–1964: I, 118, ll.25–32)
>
> [God save you, for you gave us
> (…) your son, whom you bore,
> (…) and with him you redeemed us
> from the folly
> of Eve, and overcame
> the one who conquers us.]

[7] Roig's emphasis on Eve's failure to repent is in marked contrast with Isabel de Villena's emphasis on the repentant Eve in her *Vita Christi* (1916–1918: I, 64–69).

The importance of the Virgin for Alfonso is that she bears Christ and, in so doing, co-operates in the work of redemption with her Son: 'con el nos remiisti'. The parallel between the Woman of the Old Testament and the Woman of the New is reinforced by further allusion to Genesis to the defeat of the serpent. He emphasizes the battle between the descendants of the Woman and the serpent, showing how the Virgin reversed the victory of the Fall, vanquishing the serpent-victor: 'vencisti / o que nos vencia' [you overcame the one who conquers us]. Alfonso demonstrates the reversal of vae into Ave through his interplay between the preterite and imperfect forms: 'vencisti […] vencia'. Mary's actions are underpinned by the rhyme pattern: 'disti', 'trouxisti', 'remiisti', and 'vencisti'.

Eva-Ave wordplay is used in several *Cantigas* but one of the most developed parallels is 'Entre Av' e Eva / gran departiment' á' [between Ave and Eva, / there is a great gulf]:

> *Entre Av' e Eva*
> *gran departiment' á.*
> Ca Eva nos tolleu
> o Parays' e Deus,
> Ave nos y meteu;
> porend' amigos meus:
> *Entre Av' e Eva* […]
>
> Eva nos foi deitar
> do dem' en sa prijon,
> e Ave en sacar;
> e por esta razon:
> *Entre Av' e Eva* […]
>
> Eva nos fez perder
> amor de Deus e ben,
> e pois Ave aver
> no-lo fez; e poren:
> *Entre Av' e Eva* […]
>
> Eva nos enserrou
> Os çeos sen chave,
> E Maria britou
> as portas per Ave.
> *Entre Av' e Eva* […] (1959–1964: I, 173, ll.3–25)
>
> [Between Eva and Ave,
> there is a wide gulf.
> for Eve took Paradise
> and God, from us,
> Ave set us inside it;
> wherefore, my friends:

Entre Av' e Eva (…)
Eva abandoned us
in the devil's prison,
and Ave brought us out;
and this is why
Entre Av' e Eva (…)
Eva made us lose
love of God and good things,
and possessing Ave
we did not, and, wherefore:
Entre Av' e Eva (…)
Eva shut off the heavens
without a key
and Mary burst open
the gates with her Ave.
Entre Av' e Eva.]

Alfonso's poem uses two elements of the tripartite contrast, Eva-Ave. He reworks the opening of heaven in O *Gloriosa domina*, moving it into four related contrasts: separation from heaven and entry to it, imprisonment and freedom, loss and regaining of relationship with God, and the closing and opening of the gates of Paradise. Alfonso deliberately incorporates humankind in the parallel, since heaven is opened for its sake. Eve's actions had had the effect of causing them to lose the love of God, be excluded from Paradise, and lose the key to heaven's door. The bursting of the gate of Paradise recalls the bounds of hell burst by Christ at the Resurrection and is described by Alfonso as a result of Mary's assent at the Annunciation.

Imprisonment is a principal focus for the parallel and occurs in another of the *Cantigas*. Eve is mentioned directly but vae is suggested through Alfonso's use of 'pesar e cuidar' [sorrow and worry] and Mary is designated 'ela':

Ca ela non tardou
quando nos acorreu
e da prijon sacou
du Eva nos meteu,
u pesar e cuidar
sempre nus creçia; (1959–1964: III, 316, 380, ll.7–14)

[For she did not hesitate
when she came to our aid
and freed us from the prison
where Eve had put us,
where sorrow and worry
were constantly our lot;]

The metaphor of opening and closing, as the central point of the contrast between Eve and Mary is part of the final stanza of Alfonso's *Cantiga* 411:

> Ca esta lle pos a serradura
> e abriu parayso, que per malaventura
> serrou nossa madr' Eva, que con mui gran loucura
> comeu daquesta fruita que Deus ll'ouve vedada. (1959–1964: III, 379, 411, ll.131–134)
>
> [For she put in place the lock
> and opened Paradise, which by misfortune
> our mother Eve locked, who with great folly,
> ate the fruit that God had forbidden her to eat.]

The refrain to the song sets Eve's actions, her eating of the fruit, her foolish behaviour, and its contrast to Mary's actions in the context of the latter's holy birth: 'bēeyto foi o dia e benaventurada / a ora que a Virgen, Madre de Deus, foi nada' [blessed was the day and fortunate the hour in which the Virgin, Mother of God, was born] (411.3–4). The refrain with its use of 'benaventurada' provides another contrast with Eve in the 'malaventura' occasioned by her folly. Both are significant moments in salvation history. The Eve-Mary parallel rounds off the story of Mary's conception and birth.

Lanfranc Cigala's Provençal poem provides important confirmation that the principal themes found in Alfonso's *Cantigas* were replicated in other important centres of poetic production. Cigala also focuses his Eve-Mary parallel on the opening of the door of heaven and, implicitly, on its closing by sin. Mary's sinlessness is encapsulated in her virginity and brings life, whereas Eve's sin brings death:

> per eva e per son peccat
> era tota gens morta;
> mas per vostra virginitat
> n'es uberta la porta; (in Oroz Arizcuren 1972: 312, ll.34–37)
>
> [through Eve and through her sin
> every person lay dead;
> but through your virginity
> the door is opened to us;]

Eve's folly, which leads humanity astray, and Mary's guidance, leading to heaven, provide the focus of the parallel in *Cantiga* 49:

> Ca ela nos vai demostrar
> de como nos guardemos
> do demo e de mal obrar,

e en como gāemos
o seu reyno que non á par,
que nos ja perdemos
per don' Eva, que foi errar
per sa gran folia. (1959–1964: I, 141, 49, ll.7–14)

[For she shows us
how we can keep away
from the devil and wrong-doing,
and so how we can reach
her peerless kingdom
which we lost
through lady Eve, who went astray
through her great folly.]

Heaven was lost through Eve but the possibility of reaching it is open to those who can keep from the devil's wiles and from 'mal obrar'. Heaven is now Mary's domain: 'o seu reyno'.

In a fifth variant of the parallel, Alfonso contrasts Eve's disobedience with Mary's assent, as well as the loss of rights through the Fall and their restoration through the Annunciation:

Quanto nossa primeira madre nos fez perder
per desobedeença, todo nos fez aver
aquesta a que vēo o angeo dizer
'Ave gracia plena' por nossa salvaçon.
Per Adan e per Eva fomos todos caer
en poder do diabo; mais quise-sse doer
de nos quen nos fezera, e vēo-sse fazer
nov' Adam que britasse a cabeça do dragon. (1959–1964: III, 51, 270, ll.14–22)

[All that our first mother made us lose
through disobedience, all was ours
through the one to whom the angel came to say
Ave, full of grace, for our salvation.
Through Adam and through Eve, we all fell
into the power of the devil; but he who made us
wanted to take pity on us, and there came
the New Adam, who crushed the dragon's head.]

Alfonso's parallel employs Ave but Eve's name is implicit in 'nossa primeira madre', whilst vae is hinted at only in 'perder'. In the tradition of Irenaeus's comparison, the contrast between the two centres on obedience-disobedience to the command of God. In addition, Alfonso introduces his own wordplay on Ave-aver (l.15, 17).

His own ingenious reworking of the traditional wordplay is also

inherent in *Cantiga* 340. Once again, Alfonso counterpoints losing and finding, combining them with light and dark. In the world of contrasts, Mary is the dawn, which heralds the coming of the daylight:

> Tu es alva dos albores
> que faze-los pecadores
> que vejan os seus errores
> e connoscan sa folia,
> que desvia
> d'aver om' o que devia
> que perdeu per sa loucura
> Eva, que tu Virgen pura,
> cobraste porque es alba. (III, 222, 340, ll.12–20)

> [you are dawn of dawnlight
> which makes sinners
> sorry for their misdemeanours
> and aware of their foolishness.
> This sends men astray
> from having what they should
> which Eve lost through her folly
> and you, pure Virgin
> regained because you are dawn.]

Alfonso takes the traditional Eva-Ave contrast and creates a new word-play with Ave-alba. As well as reworking the alba tradition *a lo divino*, Alfonso draws on a biblical prefiguration of the Virgin, the dawn who brings forth the Sun of righteousness, Christ.

His contemporary, Berceo, contrasts Eve and Mary in various recreations of the traditional parallel. In the *Loores*, he emphasizes Eve's fault and the reparation achieved on behalf of humanity by the Virgin Mary and he redefines the contrast in the setting of a legal wrangle:

> Madre, el tu linage mucho es enalçado,
> si Eva falta fiço, tú lo has adobado;
> bien paresce que Christo fue nuestro advocado,
> por ti es tu linage, Sennora, desreptado. (1975: 91, ll.111a–d)[8]

> [Mother, your lineage is highly praised,
> if Eve committed a fault, you set it right;
> it is well that Christ is our advocate;
> through you, your lineage is set free from accusation.]

[8] Covarrubias y Orozco gives 'repto' as 'acusación que pone un hidalgo contra otro de alevosía' [accusation of treachery which sets one noble against another] (2006: 1405). Thus, 'desreptar' is to stop accusing.

Berceo does not comment on the nature of the fault nor does he refer to that of the reparation. He highlights the importance of Mary in redemptive action: 'tu lo has adobado' [you have set it right], whilst setting her actions alongside those of the principal defence lawyer, Christ: 'nuestro advocado'. In the second section of the stanza, he places Mary as the culmination of her lineage: 'por ti es tu linage desreptado' [though you, your lineage is set free from accusation]. He does not draw any conclusion about her nature.

In the second of his hymns, Berceo transposes the Latin hymn, *Ave maris stella*, into the vernacular:

> A ti fue dicho 'Ave' del angel Gabrïel,
> Biervo dulç e suave, plus dulce qe la mel;
> Tú nos cabtén en paç, madre siempre fïel,
> Tornó en Ave Eva, la madre de Abel. (1975: 63: ll.2a–d)
>
> [To you 'Ave' was said by the angel Gabriel,
> sweet and gentle draught, sweeter than honey;
> you keep us in peace, ever faithful Mother,
> into Ave turned Eva, mother of Abel.]

To the Latin version, Berceo adds his further contrasts: the sweet honeyed drink parallels the implied bitterness of the forbidden fruit. His second addition is to describe Eve as the mother of Abel. The implied contrast he makes is between the Mother of Christ, who died for his brothers, and the mother of Abel, who was killed by his brother. Berceo's contrast between the two mothers recapitulates the way Tertullian envisaged the Eve-Mary parallel in *De carni Christi*, 17.2 (see Graef 1963–1965: I, 41).

The parallel continued to be used in the early fourteenth century as Pero López de Áyala's poetry shows. He contrasts Eve and Mary, without employing the tripartite wordplay, in one of the many Marian stanzas in his *Rimado de Palacio*:

> Tú amanseste la querella
> que por Eva a nos venía
> e el mal que fizo ella
> por Ti ovo mejoría. (1978: 326, ll.872e–h)
>
> [You smoothed out the trouble
> which accrued to us through Eve
> and the wrong she did
> through You was made right.]

López de Ayala conceives of the Eve-Mary parallel as a feudal dispute, which is resolved by the intervention of Mary.

Eva-Ave Wordplay in Fifteenth-Century Poetry

Cantavella has argued that use of the tripartite wordplay was unusual by the fifteenth century (1992–122). The question should be posed as to whether she is entirely correct in her assertion or whether there are fifteenth-century texts, apart from Roig's, which employ it.

Fernán Pérez de Guzmán contrasts Eve with the Virgin in the 'Ave Maria trobada' [Ave Maria in verse] (ID 0103 S0072), glossing '*Benedicta tu in mulieribus*'. A brief examination of his method will confirm that the parallel was still in use in the mid fifteenth century:

> Ave, Virgen Gloriosa,
> bendita entre las mugeres:
> deste nombre sola eres
> digna tu, Virgen preciosa;
> porque la madre golosa
> de la fruta deuedada
> toda muger ofuscada
> dexo con pena dolorosa. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 132, ll.28–35)
>
> [Hail, Glorious Virgin,
> blessed among women:
> of this name only you
> are worthy, precious Virgin;
> because the mother greedy
> for the forbidden fruit
> left every woman in confusion
> with pain and sorrow.]

Whilst Mary is the 'Virgen gloriosa' [glorious Virgin], Eve is the 'madre golosa' [greedy mother], not mentioned by name, although 'gloriosa'-'golosa' (ll.28, 32) creates a new parallel comparable to Eva-Ave. They are contrasted in two different female states. Mary is mother but it is her virginal state: 'Virgen Gloriosa' which Pérez de Guzmán chooses to highlight, and the sinful woman, Eve, is mother, because it is the following generations of women who are affected by her actions: 'toda muger' [every woman]. He emphasizes the uniqueness of the Virgin, obliquely referring to her sinless chosen state, whilst contrasting it with the wilful consumption of the forbidden fruit by Eve. His choice of 'bendita entre las mugeres' evokes the fruit of Mary's womb, which is to be praised in the next line of the *Ave Maria.* Of course, the poem itself is an 'Ave Maria trobada' and this provides him with the second element of his implicit triad. He alludes to the contrast between the forbidden

fruit consumed by Eve, which led to downfall for the human race, and the fruit of Mary's womb, to achieve redemption for humankind.

He also mentions the result of Eve's action on all women: 'toda muger ofuscada'. Like Roig, Pérez de Guzmán mentions specific punishments meted out to women because of Eve's sin. However, unlike Roig's, its tenor is not to condemn women but rather to pity them for what they must endure. In 'pena dolorosa' [pain and sorrow], he alludes to the pain of childbirth, thought to be the lot of women as a result of the Fall. The words evoke vae, so that the Eva-vae-Ave triad is implicit in the stanza. Although the events of the Fall are evoked in his 'Ave Maria trobada', he makes no attempt to anchor the contrast on the Immaculate Conception.

Fenollar parallels Eve and Mary in the third stanza of his entry to the 1474 *certamen* but without including any elements of the tripartite comparison:

> Del paradís sou vós la dreta scala.
> Lo cel poblant, reparau la ruhina.
> Eva ·l perdé, vós lo guanyàs per mèrits,
> Eva ·ll tanchà, e vós obrís la porta […]. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 256, ll.21–24)
>
> [You are the straight stairway to heaven.
> You repair the Fall, filling heaven with people.
> Eve lost it, you gain it through merits,
> Eve closed heaven, you open the door.]

The loss of Paradise and the gain of Paradise, symbolized in closing and opening the door, were already found in both Alfonso the Wise's *Cantigas* and in Provençal poetry.

Villasandino had used the Eve-Mary parallel in the same way almost a century earlier. His poem ends:

> Contrario de Eva, *Ave*,
> de los çielos puerta y llave,
> ruega al tu Fijo suave
> que me oya mi rogança. (in Dutton & González Cuenca 1993: 13, ll.31–34)
>
> [Opposite of Eve, *Ave*,
> door and key of heaven,
> ask your sweet Son
> to hear my prayer.]

Villasandino, like Fenollar, emphasizes the opening of heaven for sinners through the Virgin's action and nature but without specifying how

it is achieved. *Ave* and Eva are set in direct opposition. Both poems shows that the Eve-Mary parallel can be used in Marian poems without any immaculist context.

Fenollar's poem underlines the link to Genesis 3.15, since his description of the population of the earth is the section immediately following Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. He refers directly to Genesis 3.16, in 'lo cel poblant' [filling heaven with people]. His main purpose is to highlight how Paradise is regained by the merits of the Virgin, contrasting her role with that of Eve. Like Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Fenollar alludes to the reparation of the Fall in 'reparau la ruhina' [she repaired the Fall] but the manner in which it was achieved is not described. Fenollar makes no definite reference to the Conception doctrine in conjunction with this use of Genesis 3.16 and the Eve-Mary parallel. Reference to Mary's actions predominates over her essence.

Núñez is another of the fifteenth-century poets who allude to the Eve-Mary parallel rather than directly using it. He does so in a *villancico* with immaculist content. There are multiple allusions to the story of the Fall in the poem (ID 6074 E6073), beginning with the response from the Virgin:

> Responde la madre de dios
> Yo soy la que merescio
> ser madre de su excellencia,
> por reparar la dolencia
> delo que eua perdio
> assi que de mi nascio
> aquel dios
> que ha saluado a mi y a uos. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: V, 156, ll.8–12)
>
> [The Mother of God responds
> I am she who was worthy
> of being mother of his excellency,
> to repair the pain
> of all that Eve lost
> so from me was born
> the God who saved both you and me.]

Close to the opening, Núñez sets the role of the Virgin in the context of the history of salvation. She takes a part, through being Christ's mother, in countering the 'dolencia' [pain] of the effects of the Fall. Through 'dolencia', Núñez evokes vae. Two stanzas later, Núñez acclaims the Virgin as 'de toda limpieza llena, / sin pecado original' [full of all

cleanliness / without original sin] (156, ll.35–36). He alludes to Genesis 3.15, indicating that Mary was instrumental in removing the power of the enemy (ll.49–50). She also aided in removing the sin of Adam and Eve (ll.53–55). These combined allusions are enough to provide an immaculist context but the Eve-Mary triad is only evoked through 'eua' and 'dolencia'. There is no reference to Ave.

Cantavella is right in so far as there are no examples of explicit tripartite Eve-Mary parallels among Roig's contemporaries, although in several poems it is implicit. However, Cantavella's view is not vindicated when it is noted that the parallel is rarely found with all three terms in thirteenth-century poetry either.

Other Uses of the Eve-Mary Parallel

Gómez Manrique uses contrast of Mary with Eve, in his poem 'Loores e suplicaciones a Nuestra Señora' [Praises and Supplications to Our Lady] (ID 3400) to highlight the liberation of the human race by Mary from the 'clausura' [imprisonment] caused by Eve. He believes that original sin is bondage. These elements of the parallel are traditional from its first expression in Irenaeus. It is Mary's place in the history of salvation, based on the function of her body, which allows the human and divine to fuse in its bounds:

> ¡O Madre de Dios, electa
> […]
> por cuya santa mistura,
> segund la Sacra Escritura
> no dudando, bien aprueua,
> la vmana fue natura
> librada de la clausura
> en que fue puesta por Eua! (2003: 287, ll.1, 5–10)
>
> [O Mother of God, elect
> (…) through whose holy joining,
> as holy Scripture approves,
> without the shadow of doubt,
> human nature was freed
> from the prison
> in which it was placed by Eve!]

He does not contrast Mary's sinlessness directly with Eve's sinful state but rather concentrates on the effect of the actions of each. He refers to the 'santa mistura' in the poem's opening stanza, in other words, the

joining of the human with the divine, which took place at the moment of the conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin. Irenaeus had also related the parallel to Mary's role as surety for the humanity of Christ.

The second stanza of the poem deals with the birth of Christ, referring to the Virgin as 'virgo senper yntata' [*virgo semper intacta*] (147, l.13). The image of the sun passing through glass provides him with a traditional metaphor for the Virgin's perpetual virginity (Hirn 1928): 'sana vedriera / finca del sol traspasada' [unbroken glass / pierced by the sun] (147, ll.16–17). He brushes with Genesis again, referring in passing to reparation for the Fall: 'Por ti lunbrosa lunbrera, / nuestra cayda primera / fue, Señora, reparada!' [By you shining star / our first Fall / was, Lady, repaired] (147, ll.18–20) (see also Chapter 6).

Gómez Manrique does not clarify exactly in what terms he conceived reparation of the Fall, except to specify that he considered that the Virgin had an important role in it because of her motherhood of Christ. It might have been possible to interpret 'por' as meaning 'by' meaning that the Virgin had sole responsibility for the reparation of the Fall but the writer of the gloss in the *CG* is theologically correct in interpreting 'por' as meaning 'through': '*Reparada*: En quanto Cristo que fue el reparador tomo della la carne en que padescio' [Reparada: in as much as Christ was the redeemer he took from her the flesh in which he suffered] (148). He links 'reparada' [repaired] directly to the Crucifixion. Later in the same poem, he makes explicit the way in which the Virgin and the serpent are ranged on opposing sides. He considers that the Virgin's holiness is what allows her to successfully stand against him. The Eve-Mary parallel is thus drawn implicitly into an immaculist context through close alliance to the battle between Mary and the serpent.

Fifteenth-century Catalan poets adapt the traditional Eve-Mary parallel to embody the antithesis sinful / sinless and draw closer to an immaculist interpretation. One such example can be found in Jaume de Olesa's poem, submitted to the 1486 *certamen*:

> Vós no sentís la sentència dada
> d'Eva pel crim, Verge de culpa sana,
> y axí molt més la taca perpetrada
> del vell Adam en vós nunqu· és estada. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 471, ll.78–81)

> [You do not feel the sentence passed
> on Eve for her crime, Virgin, whole and free from blame

and so, more than ever, the stain
of the old Adam has never been in you.]

In these lines, Olesa emphasizes the sin resulting from the Fall. Thus, Eve has had the judgement of sin passed upon her, 'la sentèntia dada' [the sentenced passed], and has contracted original sin, whilst the Virgin remains free from blame. The sentence could have referred either to the pains of childbirth or to the impulse to sin but Olesa's inclusion of the 'taca […] del vell Adam' [the sin of the old Adam] makes his intention clear (ll.80–81). Since Olesa's poem is part of a competition in honour of the Immaculate Conception, it is a small step to conclude that the Eve-Mary parallel is intended as an illustration of it.

The case is even clearer in Juan Tallante's *Canҫion a la conҫepҫion de nuestra señora* [Song at the Conception of Our Lady] (ID3365), in which a range of different Old Testament textual signifiers are combined with an Eve-Mary parallel to develop an immaculist context. The rubric given to the poem by the compiler of the *CG* provides a first indicator. The opening lines of the poem blend allusions to Wisdom literature and to scholastic argument. At the close of the stanza, Tallante refers to the Fall, as well as setting Mary in contrast to Eve, who caused it:

Tu fuste desde ab eterrno
en la voluntad del padre
elegida para madre
del que libro del infierrno
la vmanidad perdida
por su sangre derramada
rreparando la cayda
que por eua nos fue dada. (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: II, 482, ll.5–12)

[You existed from the beginning
in the will of the father
chosen as mother
of the one who freed lost humanity
from hell
through his blood spilt
repairing the Fall
which was accorded us by Eve.]

Tallante combines a pre-creation signifier 'desde ab eterrno', with an allusion to scholastic arguments discernible in 'en la voluntad del padre'. He then uses the comparison between the sin of Eve with its dire consequence for humanity: 'perdida' and 'cayda' and Mary's role

in redeeming humanity. Mary repairs the Fall because she is 'elegida como madre'. The Eve-Mary parallel underpins Mary's motherhood, which is set in the context of its being pre-ordained from the beginning of time for the salvation of humanity by God.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how theologians continued to reflect on the Eve-Mary parallel which had been a traditional way of comparing Mary's actions with those of Eve and of determining a role for Mary in the construction of salvation history. It reaches back to her prefiguration as the Woman of Genesis, already explored in Chapter 5 but it also reaches forward to the salutation of the angel. The words used, 'Full of grace' were to become one of the principal biblical texts used in support of the doctrine at its definition in 1854.

I have examined how the Eve-Mary parallel was used both in liturgy and in poetry. In liturgy it can mark out the difference in actions of the two women in relationship to the dragon as in Castilian breviaries. There the Eve-Mary parallel is in combination with the frequent Conception signifier, the battle between the serpent and the Woman. In some liturgies, there is a focus on Mary's opening of heaven and Eve's closing of it, a concept that was traditional in some Marian hymns, such as *O Gloriosa domina*. The difficulty in determining whether the Eve-Mary parallel is immaculist in intent is compounded by its ubiquity.

In my discussion of Hispanic poetry, I have shown that the comparison could either be bipartite, Eva-Ave, or that it could be tripartite, Eva-vae-Ave. I argued that the parallel was so well known by the fifteenth century that it was unnecessary for poets to include all the elements of the comparison and that they could still intend a tripartite comparison even without doing so. Roig is one of the few poets to incorporate all three elements in his defence of the doctrine in the fifteenth century, however, this does not make his usage unusual as has been previously believed. Most poets who write about the Conception also use it, although they may do so less explicitly. Many use synonyms for vae, or exclude one of the names, referring to either woman by her actions. In the hands of a poet like Tallante, the parallel can underpin pre-creation signifiers and add a further layer of allusion to other biblical prefigurations used in support of the doctrine.

Many poets prior to the fifteenth-century also use the Eve-Mary parallel, but they do not use it for the same purposes. Alfonso the Wise uses it to emphasize the importance of the Incarnation and Berceo envisages a feudal dispute resolved by Mary's actions as intercessor or Advocate for humanity. For this reason, the Eve-Mary parallel, as is the case with many other biblical allusions used in Conception poetry, cannot be read as a Conception signifier on its own. When it is found in combination with other signifiers, it does have a role to play in evoking the Conception. The role of the parallel is, therefore, to extend and add depth to other scriptural prefigurations.

CHAPTER TEN

THE VIRGIN MARY AND THE KISS: APOCRYPHAL BIRTH NARRATIVES AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Theologians interested in Mary's role in salvation had little to go on beyond the salutation, Ave, the angel's greeting to her at the Annunciation. The Gospels tell little about Mary's life prior to her becoming the mother of Jesus and relatively little about her after the Christmas story. Her presence in early scenes in Luke's Gospel as well as at the Crucifixion was not enough to satisfy popular interest. From the second century, a number of apocryphal stories began circulating, focusing particularly on undocumented areas of her life. Their existence bears witness to interest in Mary's parentage and birth as well as the events surrounding her death.[1] Creating legends to complete the early life of important historical figures is a phenomenon often associated with the epic, and examples can be seen in the story of Rodrigo, hero of Roncesvalles, a set of youthful exploits known as the *Mocedades de Rodrigo* [The Adventures of the Young Rodrigo]. Soon, interest in Mary's early life led to a desire to celebrate it in feast days. In turn, that led to debate about her preservation from sin and how this could be demonstrated. This chapter will explore how far such apocryphal stories were considered appropriate for representing the Immaculate Conception in literature and art.

The birth story of Mary was replicated in many forms in the medieval period. It is present in Jacopone de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (1995) and it was read as part of the liturgy for the feast-day of St Anne.[2]

[1] The Legend of Anne and Joachim from the *Protoevangelium of James* was reworked as The Legend of Anne and Joachim in the *Pseudo-Matthew* and also as the Legend of Anne and Joachim in the *Liber de nativitate Mariae*. There are minor differences of detail and elaboration between the three versions. For examination of the relationship between the texts, as well as of the Infancy Gospels, see Wilhelm Schneemelcher (1991: 414–469).

[2] See, for example, a variety of breviaries: *Breviarium de officio totius anni secundum consuetudinem ecclesiae vicensis* (AEV 86, fol. 192^{r}), *Breviarium vicensis* (AEV 81, fol. 323^{r}), *Breviarium sedis vicensis* (AEV 84, fol. 368^{v}), *Breviarium urgellense* (AEV 85, fol. 116^{r}), *Breviarum sedis vicensis* (AEV, fol. 415^{r}). It is found at the feast of the Conception in

The details are always similar: Mary's father, Joachim, and her mother, Anne, the priests' rejection of Joachim's offering at the Temple because of his wife's barrenness, Anne's disappointment at not being able to have children and her song of sorrow in the garden at the sight of a family of sparrows, the double annunciation to the Virgin's parents, their meeting at the Golden Gate, their embrace and conception of Mary, and the dedication of Mary, a child prodigy, to the temple were aspects of the story replicated in both art and literature.

The stories drew on parallels with the New Testament birth narrative of John the Baptist and with the Old Testament ones of Samuel and Isaac. Each of the mothers, Elizabeth, Hannah, and Sarah, were past the age of childbearing and longed for a child. In biblical versions of the theme of the barren mother, both Sarah and Hannah conceived mighty prophets in their old age. Annunciations are built into each story. Such parallels meant that Mary's birth was put on a par with that of Old Testament figures and the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist. The name of Mary's mother was modelled on Samuel's as well as on that of Anna, the Gospel witness to Christ's presentation in the temple. Stories of miraculous birth have a great deal in common with the birth of Jesus, which they prefigure. The aim of the apocryphal nativity is not only to give Mary parity with important biblical figures but also to defend her purity and nobility from its detractors: 'The second-century author of the *Protoeuangelium* seems to have drawn motifs for his account of Mary's birth and childhood from Old Testament infancy stories, in response to anti-Christian versions of Jesus's origins' (Clayton 1998: 15–16).

Most saints' days in the calendar mark the anniversary of the death or 'birthday into heaven', of the saint (Rush 1960: 259). John the Baptist's birth was accorded a feast-day and there was pressure to establish a similar one for Mary, since her role in the economy of salvation was greater. Mary's Nativity was established by the ninth century in the East and soon spread to the West (see above, Chapter 2). The Conception was celebrated from the sixth or seventh century in the East (Tavard 1992: 207; Warner 1976: 239). In the early days it was known as the feast of St Anne (Bouman 1958: 114–115). St Anne's feast was transferred to 26 July but, even in mid-fourteenth-century Spain, a separate feast for St Anne was not always established. In Navarre, the Concep-

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one breviary from the Barcelona diocese, *Breviarium secundum usum ecclesiae barcinonensis* (AEV 83, fol. 467^{r}).

tion of Mary was celebrated with readings about Anne's conception and the feast of St Anne is added to some breviaries, even in the late fourteenth-century (ACP 19, fol. 4[r]). By the fourteenth century in the Pyrenees, a separate feast day of Anne had already been established (ACLl, Rc-0026, fol. 342[v]; ACA, R112, fol. 263[v]) but a late thirteenth-century *consueta* (ACA, SC46, fol. 155[r]) has the addition of St Anne's feast to the calendar.

Once theologians began to debate the idea that Mary had been preserved from original sin, attention focused on how this fitted with apocryphal birth stories. During the Middle Ages, when artists represented the Conception, they often pinpointed it as the moment of Mary's parents' meeting at the Golden Gate. Stratton describes how the 'embrace at the Golden Gate, found earlier in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, comes to Spain in the fifteenth century where it is often given an immaculist interpretation'.[3] It has been argued that, by the end of the fifteenth century, tastes were changing and the stories were beginning to go out of fashion, however, in Spain, the Golden Gate continued to represent the Conception in the sixteenth century.[4] Once scholastic debate about the Immaculate Conception, which relied more on logical argument and on proof from authorities than on myth, began to gain currency, ways of depicting biblical prefigurations of the sinlessness of Mary began to gain ground. Evidence from Spain shows that, even so, the Apocryphal Gospels were not phased out in the early sixteenth century.

Literature and the Apocryphal Gospels

As might be expected, Alfonso the Wise includes a number of references to the Nativity of Mary in his *Cantigas*. He has been considered the first to celebrate the Conception in the vernacular in Spain: 'Parece que a este rey toca la gloria de haber cantado el primero en lengua

[3] Stratton records examples of the osculatory Conception at Vich by Ferrando Camarge, at Becerril de Campos by Pedro Berruguete (1450–1455, d.1504), and in Valencia Cathedral by Fernando Yáñez de la Almedina (1465–1536). All were completed at the end of the fifteenth century (1994: 22). Galizzi (1992) shows how apocryphal stories were still being used in depiction of the Immaculate Conception in late fifteenth-century Italy.

[4] Warner (1976: 214) indicates changes were taking place in artistic representations of the Conception. She argues that the movement away from such works as the *Book of James* towards the inspired word of God began as the cult of St Anne climaxed,

vulgar el singular privilegio de María' [This king seems to have the important status of being the first to sing the special privilege of Mary in the vernacular] (Riera Estarellas 1955: 248). Riera Estarellas quotes at length from *Cantiga* 411 in support of his argument and believes that the second stanza expresses the conception of Mary by natural means and the third the preservation of her soul *in primo instanti* (1955: 249). Unfortunately, study of the whole *Cantiga* does not support his argument. Alfonso begins with a reference to a prefiguration of the Virgin's birth from Isaiah:

> E d'aquesta naçença falou muit' Ysaya,
> e prophetando disse que arvor sayria
> ben de rayz de Jesse, e que tal fror faria
> que do Sant' Espirito de Deus fosse morada. (1959–1964: III, 374, ll.5–8)
>
> [And of that birth Isaiah spoke
> and in his prophecies said that a tree would spring
> from the root of Jesse, and that it would bring forth such a flower
> that it would be the dwelling of the Holy Spirit of God.]

Alfonso is echoing a sung response found in many Nativity offices of the Virgin: 'Stirps iesse uirgam produxit uirgaque florem. Et super hanc florem requiescit spiritus almus' [The root of Jesse produced a branch and the branch a flower. And on that flower rested the gentle spirit] (AEV 84, fol. 404^{r}). It is found as early as the thirteenth century, as a Cistercian *Consueta* from San Cugat in Catalonia shows (ACA SC 46).

The branch from Jesse's root is woven into other elements of the Nativity office. It is the *capitulum* at the feast of the Nativity in Huesca breviaries (ACH 14, fol. 154^{r}; ACH 13, fol. 542^{v}). It is embedded in the *prosa*, *Lucis cuius festa*, used at vespers at the feast of St Anne in many regions of Spain.[5] It is also found in Gerona in a *prosa*, *Virgo es sacra*.[6] It is used at compline in Calahorra (ACC 17, fol. 83^{v}; 18, fol. 128^{r}). Although all these breviaries date from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, the office was older.

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at the end of the fifteenth century. By then, propaganda paintings commissioned for Franciscan churches began abandoning the embrace at the Golden Gate in favour of the theme of the Virgin's prefiguration in Scripture.

[5] See, for example, *Breviarium ilerdense* (ACLl 16, fol. 342^{v}), *Breviarium cisterciense* (BET 45, fol. 1^{r}), *Breviarium* 1533 (BUV, p.321), *Breviarium romano-toletanum* (Montserrat 880, fol. 259^{r}), *Breviarium cisterciense* (AHT, fol. 446^{r}), and *Breviarium vicense* (AEV 1557, fol. 393^{r}).

[6] *Breviarium gerundense* (ACG 125, fol. 549^{v}), *Breviarium gerundense* (ACG 15, fol. 246^{v}), *Missale gerundense* (ADG 8, fol. 129^{v}), *Missale gerundense* (ADG 9, fol. 325^{r}), and *Breviarium gerundense* (ADG 14, fol. 336^{r}).

In the third stanza, Alfonso records apocryphal stories about the Virgin's parents: 'mas pero de seu padre, que Joachin chamado / foi, e sa madre Anna, direi-vos seu estado' [more I will tell of her father, who was called Joachim and, his mother Anne, I will mention her estate]. He describes the way in which the holy pair gave one third of their income to the Church, one third to the temple, and kept one third for themselves. He then describes how Joachim was barred from the temple: 'Ruben e Symeon vedaron-ll' a entrada'. In Peninsular offices of St Anne, Ruben is often the name of the High Priest.[7] Joachim, distraught, goes into the mountains, transposed to a Galician setting, 'metudo no meogo / duas grandes montannas' [set in the middle of two high mountains] (374, ll.15–16, 375, l.33, 376, ll.61–62):

> El ouve dest' embargo e vergonna tamanna
> que non foi a ssa casa, nen-no viu sa companna;
> mas fillou seus gaados e foi-ss' aa montanna,
> assi que por gran tenpo non fez ali tornada. (375, ll.40–43)
>
> [He was so greatly insulted and shamed by this
> that he did not go to his house nor did he see his wife
> but gathered his flocks and went to the mountain
> so, for a long, long time he did not show his face.]

Whilst Anne is weeping, she is comforted by an angelic visitation and an annunciation:

> Non temas, Anna, ca Deus oyda
> a ta oraçon ouve; e poren sen falida
> de teu marido filla averás. (376, ll.55–57)
>
> [Do not be afraid, Anne, for God has heard
> your prayer; and, thus, without fail,
> of your husband, you shall bear a girl child.].

Joachim also receives his own angelic visitation where he protests that he will be unable to return, since he is despised and rejected by his neighbours:

> […] ca mais me val que viva
> en logar apartado, que vida mui cativa
> fazer entre mias gentes, vergonnos' e viltada. (376, ll.81–83)

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[7] This varies from breviary to breviary, but Ruben is common. See, for example *Breviarium secundum consuetudinem ecclesiae vicensis* (AEV 81, fol. 369^{r}), *Breviarium sedis vicensis* (AEV 84, fol. 369^{r}), or *Breviarium gerundense* (ADG 15, fol. 210^{v}). In *Breviarium secundum consuetudinem sedis vicensis* (AEV 82, fol. 415^{v}), *Breviarium ilerdense* (ACLl 16, fol. 343^{r}),

> [for it would be better for me to live
> in a place apart, than to live a miserable life
> among my people, scorned and despised]

Alfonso's verses echo the antiphon regularly used at lauds for the office of St Anne: 'hec ad casam exhinc suam repedare noluit' [for he did not wish to return to his house].[8]

He faithfully reproduces the details pertaining to Joachim's flight to the mountains and also its timescale. In the *Pseudo-Matthew*, Anne bewails the fact that her husband has been absent for five months, whilst, in the *Cantigas*, the father of Mary has been absent for almost six months 'e eno mes d'agosto / avera ben seis meses que fiz aqui estada' (ll.77–78). He had abstained from sexual contact prior to returning home, thus ensuring the sanctity of the physical act of conception.

In Alfonso's version, Joachim sets off for home, but by the ministrations of the angel sees his 'companneyra' by the Golden Gate. Anne has gone there, as if to her wedding, 'levou seus parentes sigo, com' eu aprendo, / ben com se ouvess' a casar outra vegada' (378, ll.132–133). Alfonso depicts her as a bride because of his concern about the physical act to follow the meeting of husband and wife. After the wedding feast, the couple steal away together:

> E pois viu seu marido, obridou seus pesares
> e con muitas saudes e muitos abraçares
> o acolleu muy leda, e pois muitos manjares
> lle guisou, e sa casa muy ben encortynnada. (378, ll.135–138)
>
> [Then she saw her husband and forgot her sorrows
> and with many greetings and many embraces
> she welcomed him with joy and then many fine foods
> she prepared for him, with the drapes in her house drawn.]

Alfonso provides a delightful description of the final preparations for Mary's conception and, in his focus on the activity at the couple's home rather than at the meeting at the Golden Gate, his version is similar to other vernacular versions of the story, including English ones (Astell 1997: 411). The *Pseudo-Matthew* and Jacopone de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* remain silent, moving straight from the meeting and the thanksgiving

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Breviarium urgellense (ACSU incunable 147, fol. 251^{v}), or *Breviarium urgellense* (AEV 85, fol. 116^{r}), the name is Isachar.

[8] See, for example, *Breviarium vicensis* (AEV 86, fol. 193^{r}).

of Anne to the nine months of pregnancy. In Alfonso's version, after a discreet description of the couple's activity, there is a theological interpretation:

> E logo que foi viva no corpo de sa madre,
> foi quita do pecado que Adan, nosso padre,
> fezera per consello daquel que, pero ladre
> por nos levar consigo, a porta ll' é serrada
> Do inferno. (379, ll.150–154)
>
> [And as soon as she was alive in the body of her mother,
> she was free of the sin which Adam, our father,
> committed on the advice of the one who is baying,
> to carry us off with him, the gate of Hell is closed to him.]

The Virgin's sinless state is contrasted to Adam's sin. She is liberated from original sin in the womb of her mother: 'quita do pecado' [free from sin], and this cleansing is to prepare her for her holy birth. Understanding of Alfonso's views on the Conception hinges on what he intends by 'alive in the body of her mother'. Given the dominant interpretation of the day, it is likely that he intends 'alive' to refer to the Virgin after the infusion of her rational soul.

On the one hand, it could be argued that the emphasis of the poem is borne out by its title. The sequence of the series of poems bears out this interpretation: 'Esta é a primeyra, da Nacença de Santa Maria, que cae no mes de Setembro' [This first is of the Nativity of St Mary, which falls in September]. No mention is made of the Conception. The *cantiga*'s refrain also underlines the focus on the Nativity: 'Beeyto foi o dia e benaventurada / a ora que a Virgen, Madre de Dios, foi nada' [Blessed was the day and well-augured the hour that the Virgin Mother of God was born] (374, ll.1, 3). St Bernard's negative judgement about the Conception carried enormous weight in the twelfth century (see Chapter 3) but even he held that the Virgin's birth had been holy and should be celebrated. It is likely that Alfonso considered that the Virgin had been sanctified in her mother's womb in preparation for her birth.

On the other, it must be conceded that, elsewhere, Alfonso demonstrated a lack of interest in Conception without sin. He never refers to the Conception feast and does not include it among the feasts of Mary which the Church celebrates. He is concerned to depict Mary's Conception as holy. He followed his sources in describing the period of abstinence, which preceded Joachim's act of procreation. This concern fits equally well with demonstrating how a physical embrace could be

holy or with showing how her parents prepared themselves to demonstrate the holiness of her birth.

It also must be conceded that to argue that Alfonso defended the Conception doctrine 'logo que' [as soon as] must be interpreted as indicating concurrence of sanctification and conception. This is possible on a linguistic level but on the theological, less so. Theologians only began to debate the question of the moment at which Mary's sanctification occurred after Henry of Ghent. It seems unlikely that Alfonso defended this argument, intending 'logo que' to place conception and sanctification in the same instant. 'Logo que' could also be interpreted as indicating sequence, meaning immediately after. In either case, the stanza shows that Alfonso wished to emphasize the way the Virgin was prepared for her future role.

Riera Estarellas examines the tenth poem in the series (396–398), which is dedicated to the doctrine of the Assumption: 'é no dia aa Proçession, como as proçessioes do çeo reçeberon a Santa Maria quando sobio aos çeos' [it is on the day of the procession, just as the processions of heaven received St Mary when she rose to heaven]. In it, Alfonso begins by calling on blessings for various aspects of the childhood of the Virgin:

> Beeita es, Maria, Filla, Madr' e criada,
> de Deus, teu Padr' e Fillo, est'é cousa prouvada.
> Beeyta foi a ora en que tu geerada
> fuste e a ta alma de Deus santivigada,
> e beeyto [o dia] en que pois fuste nada
> e d'Adam o pecado quito e perdoada,
> e beeytos los panos u fust' envurullada
> e outrossi a teta que ouviste mamada,
> e beeyta a agua en que fuste bannada
> e a santa vianda de que fust'avondada,
> e beeyta a fala que ouviste falada
> e outrossi a letra de que fust' ensinada. (396, ll.3–14)

> [Blessed is she, Mary, Daughter, Mother and handmaid,
> of God, Father and Son to you, this is proven.
> Blessed was the hour in which you were conceived
> and your soul sanctified by God,
> and blessed the day on which you were born
> and pardoned, with Adam's sin lifted from you,
> and blessed the cloths in which you were wrapped
> and also the breast that gave you suck
> and blessed the water in which you were bathed
> and the holy food which you were given

and blessed the speech you spoke
and the letters from which you were taught.]

Some of the blessings replicate those for Christ, such as the one commonly read at the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin: 'blessed the breast that gave you suck' (Luke 11.28): 'e beeytos los panos u fust' envurullada / e outrossi a teta […], e beeyta a agua en que fuste bannada [blessed are the cloths, and the breast, and the water in which you were bathed]. The blessing recalls medieval miniatures of the Virgin's Nativity. One of the most frequent in breviaries is the Virgin Mary being bathed by the midwife whilst her mother reclines in bed.[9]

Among the blessings offered to Mary is one which apparently makes her conception and sanctification concurrent: 'En el tercero y cuarto verso [fifth and sixth in the Coimbra edition] pone como la misma hora la de la generación y la de la santificación. En el primero y segundo [third and fourth in the Coimbra edition] confiesa la predestinación de María' [In the third and fourth verses, he sets the generation and the sanctification at the same moment. In the first and second, he confesses Mary's predestination] (Riera Estarellas 1955: 250). The words 'Beeyta a ora en que tu geerada / fuste' [Blessed be the hour in which you were engendered] (1959–1964: 396, ll.5–6) are important from the point of view of Alfonso's contribution to immaculism in poetry, especially since the laudatory invocation of the moment of her generation is combined with 'e a ta alma de Deus santivigada' [and your soul sanctified by God]. Once these two lines are placed alongside the following two, it is clear that they are ambivalent and could equally well be looking forward to the birth rather than back to the conception: 'e beeyto o dia en que pois fuste nada' [and blessed the day when you were born] is then combined with 'd'Adam o pecado quito e perdoada' [pardoned, with Adam's sin lifted from you]. In this blessing, Alfonso allies the pardoning of Adam's sin with the birth of the Virgin. If he intended the sanctification and conception to be concurrent then she would not need further pardon at the time of her birth. It is likely that, in line with the theological thinking of his period, Alfonso considered the Virgin was sanctified at some time unspecified between conception and birth, to

[9] One version of this is in a late medieval Valencian vespers book (BUV 391, fol. 188r). An unusual miniature in a Franciscan illustrated breviary, *Breviarium Franciscanum* (BN Vitr. 21–6), depicts St Anne in bed, surrounded by her attendants and breastfeeding the infant Virgin.

prepare her for a holy Nativity, the feast which was recognized by the Church.

Riera Estarellas also discusses the titles accorded the Virgin in the opening lines. Because of their position, they could signify that the Virgin was chosen and equipped for her role by the blessings mentioned in subsequent verses. It is also possible that the names given to her are intended to illustrate her relationship with God, mother, daughter, handmaid, rather than holding any sense that she was predestined for the roles.

Alfonso's final blessing of the letters from which the Virgin was taught reflects the medieval tradition of the Virgin reading. Deyermond describes the iconography of the Virgin at the Annunciation, which from the eleventh century onward frequently depicts her reading. He shows how the Virgin weaving at the Annunciation, found from the fifth century onwards, began to be replaced (1999a: 73–74). Alfonso's inclusion of the Virgin's studies among his blessings indicates that he was aware of the new tradition of showing her reading. Deyermond does not mention them, but there are also many miniatures and altarpieces which show St Anne teaching her, so depicting the tradition of female learning (Sheingorn 2003). The depiction of the Virgin spinning continued to be used, but was less associated with the Annunciation. A fifteenth-century book of hours, originating from Flanders (BN Vitr. 24.10), depicts the Virgin spinning but the miniature is outside the seven Joys: Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Epiphany, Presentation in the Temple, Pentecost, and Coronation which begin at fol. 57^{r}. Deyermond's belief that the weaving Virgin was completely replaced by the Virgin reading with the last example in the thirteenth century is tested by the presence of a depiction of the spinning Virgin in a fifteenth-century book of hours, this time from Paris (BN Vitr. 24.7). Whilst there is no angel visible, there is no other miniature depicting the moment of the Annunciation. Of the remaining miniatures, the first is linked to the joys of the Virgin, depicting the Visitation (fol. 46^{v}), followed by the Nativity, Annunciation to the Shepherds, Epiphany, Flight into Egypt, and Coronation. Because the Annunciation is not otherwise represented, the spinning Virgin may be intended to take its place and suggest the moment just before the Annunciation occurred.[10]

[10] Like the image of the rose which had many sexual connotations in popular lyric, that of weaving and spinning had a close association with erotic activity. See Masera (1999).

On two further occasions, Alfonso uses 'santivigada' in connection with the intra-uterine Virgin. On both, the reference is preceded by a refrain connecting it to the Virgin's Nativity:

> Muito per dev' a Reynna
> dos ceos seer loada
> de nos, ca no mundo nada
> foi ben come fror d'espynna. (1959–1964: III, 146, ll.1–4)
>
> [Highly should the Queen of the heavens be praised
> by us,
> for, born in the world,
> she was just like flower from thorn.]

The flower or rose on the thorn (see Chapter 7) is a powerful image of the Virgin's sanctity, found in many Nativity offices (AEV 80, fol. 319^{r}; AEV 82, fol. 457^{r}; AEV 83, fol. 415^{v}; 86, fol. 214^{r}):

> Ca sempre santivigada
> foi dez que a fez seu padre
> eno corpo de sa madre,
> u jouve des pequenynna. (ll.6–9)
>
> [For she was ever sanctified
> from the time when her father made her
> in the body of her mother,
> where she lay from being very tiny.]

Alfonso then appears to place her sanctification at the very moment of her generation by her father. Emphasis, as is to be expected, is on relating the physical generation of the Virgin to her sanctification. How the stanza is read depends on 'dez que' [as soon as, when]. If the first meaning is chosen, the stanza appears to have a clear intention to defend the immaculist view. Once the second meaning of 'dez que' [after] is taken into account, it is less certain.

The final use of 'santivigada' is as ambiguous as the others. It occurs in a *cantiga* of praise to the Virgin, which dwells in each stanza on different events in the life of Mary: the Annunciation, the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation (of the Trinity), the Coronation of the Virgin, and the opening of Paradise but significantly does not dedicate any to her Conception. The first stanza refers to the Nativity of the Virgin: 'Qual é a santivigada / ant' e depois que foi nada? / Madre de Deus, nostro Sennor' (1959–1964: 197, ll.1–3) [Who is the lady sanctified before and after she was born? Mother of God, our Lord]. The poet believes that sanctification was a two-stage process occurring both before and after the birth of the Virgin. This approach to sanctification is indicative of how

the doctrine fluctuated during the thirteenth century. Aquinas proposes a two-stage sanctification: 'Ad tertium dicendum quod Spiritus Sanctus in beata Virgine duplicem purgationem fecit' (Lib.III.a.3.resp.3). He argued that the first sanctification was in preparation for the conception of Christ and the second was when he was conceived.

If Alfonso were the first defender of the Immaculate Conception in Spanish literature, then he would logically place the Virgin's liberation from original sin at the time of conception. He would also provide evidence of being an ardent defender of the feast-day which celebrated such an event. In the first poem of the series, an acrostic on the five letters of the name, Maria, he defines the five feasts of the Virgin:

> Santa Egreja ordinou
> çinque festas, porque achou
> çinque letras no nome sou,
> como vos quero depa[r]tir.
> A primeira que M é
> mostra de com' a nossa ffe
> naçend ela, naceu e sé
> y firm' a queno comedir. (373, ll.14–17, 19–22)
>
> [Holy Church ordained five feast days
> because there were
> five letters in her name,
> as I will show you.
>
> [The first which is M
> shows how, when she was born,
> our faith was born, and is firm in
> all who believe it.]

According to Alfonso, the Marian feasts which the Church recognized were the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Presentation in the Temple, the Coronation, and the Assumption. In most thirteenth-century breviaries, the five Marian feasts included in the calendar are slightly different from Alfonso's list. They are the Purification, at 2 February, the Annunciation, at 25 March, the Assumption, at 15 August, the Nativity, at 8 September, and the December Annunciation, sometimes called the Expectation, at 18 December. Thirteenth-century breviaries from Castile-Leon (ACL 12) and from areas bordering it, like Huesca and Lerida (ACH 9, fol. 9; ACH 6, fol. 140^{r}; ACLl Rc-0026, fol. 438^{v}), include the December Annunciation but those from Aragon generally do not (ACA SC 47; BET 9).[11] By the late fifteenth century, many calen-

[11] The early fourteenth-century Gerona breviary (ACG 125) does not include the

dars, like those in the Toledo breviaries also include the Visitation, at 2 July, as well as the Conception (ACT 33.6, fols. 6r–11v; ACT 33.7, fols. 1r–6v). The Conception of Mary was still unrecognized by the Church according to breviaries contemporary to Alfonso. He dedicates one stanza to each of ten aspects of Mary's life. The Coronation, which did not have a set feast in the calendar does not have a poem dedicated to it, whilst the December Annunciation merits one. The feast, instituted by St Ildephonse (III, 380–381), a Castilian saint, was particularly emphasized in a period of military action by Castile to reconquer territory from the Moors.

Cancionero Poems and Apocryphal Stories

In the mid fifteenth century, elements of the apocryphal birth narratives continue to be associated with the Virgin's conception, birth, and early life. Fifteenth-century poets continue to emphasize some of the same elements that were found in Alfonso the Wise's poetry. Interest in the Virgin's parents, particularly in their old age is a feature of Juan Álvarez Gato's *canción* 'A la conçebçion de n*ue*stra Señora' [To the Conception of Our Lady] (ID 3133). He calls St Anne 'la santa vieja Santana' [The holy old lady St Anne] (in Dutton & Krogstadt 1990–1991: I, 571, l.3):

> Alegrate pecador
> questa p*re*ñada y vfana
> la santa vieja santana
> de la madre del Señor
>
> De la qual conçebiçion (!)
> aquel angel fue venido
> vino la Reparaçion del mundo
> quera perdido
> pues co*n* abiuada gana
> da graçias al hazedor
> questa preñada santana
> de la Reyna soberana
> la madre del Salvador

December Annunciation. None of the thirteenth-century breviaries from Santes Creus monastery in Tarragona province mention it. The thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Cistercian breviaries from Santa María de Ripoll, or San Cugat leave 18 December blank in the calendar. The late fifteenth-century *Ordinario de San Cugat* (ACA SC77) has S[anct]e m[ari]e sper[antia] as an addition to the calendar.

[Rejoice, sinner,
for holy old St Anne
is pregnant and proud
with Our Lady
From that conception
to which the angel came
the reparation of the world came,
for it was lost.
So with great enthusiasm
give thanks to the Creator
for St Anne is pregnant
with the sovereign Queen,
mother of the Saviour.]

The *canción* has a number of interesting features. It addresses the sinful reader directly: 'Alegrate, pecador'. It sets St Anne's pregnancy in the context of the Fall. It is cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving for sinners, since it will lead to redemption for the world: 'De la qual conçebiçion / […] vino la reparacion / del mundo' (ll.5–7). Álvarez Gato is providing a literary St Anne Trinitarian with Anne conceiving the Virgin and the Virgin conceiving Christ, the reparation of the world.[12] The conception of the Virgin borrows its rationale and manner from her conception of Christ. The first ensures the second and both are marked by annunciations. It is also to be noted that Joachim does not feature, meaning that Anne takes on a virginal mantle. Álvarez Gato delicately suggests that the moment of conception was the moment of the angelic annunciation, when Joachim was still in the mountains tending his flock. The *estribillo* contains an important feature: encouragement to rejoice in the conception of the Virgin by Anne, 'Alegrate, pecador' (l.1) and, when it is reworked at the end of the poem, a second: encouragement to thanksgiving for the existence of the Virgin, 'Da graçias al Hazedor' [Give thanks to the Creator] (l.10).

Juan Álvarez Gato's *canción* is deceptively simple. The verse form employed with its near repetition of ll.2–4 and ll.11–13 contributes to

[12] St Anne Trinitarian representations of Anne, Mary, and Christ emphasize the female lineage and eliminate the fathers. See Ashley & Sheingorn (1990). At p.79, is a sixteenth-century woodcut from the *Heures à l'usage de Rouen*, printed by Simon Vostre, in which the Virgin and child appear encased in the figure of St Anne. The figure is surrounded by symbols from the *Tota pulchra es* (see Chapter 7). Significantly, the woodcuts in the *Missale urgellense* (1509) (ACSU) are the same for both Anne's and Mary's Annunciations, serving as an illustration of how the experiences of the two were increasingly fused.

the illusion. However, he uses the Latinate 'reparaçion' to describe the purpose of the conception and its impact on salvation history. Although the tone of the poem is celebratory, the poet does not take the opportunity to support the Immaculate Conception by making a definite statement of belief in it. He leaves belief in the doctrine to be inferred from the way he is presenting Mary's conception as worthy of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Álvarez Gato's poem is representative of what must have been a much more widely addressed theme.

Catalan Poetry and Apocryphal Stories

In the fifteenth century, interest in apocryphal stories is still strong in the kingdom of Aragon. Joan Roïç de Corella wrote a prose work entitled *La vida de la gloriosa santa Anna* (BUV 2061, fol. 120^{v}). Sor Isabel de Villena also dedicates many of the early chapters of her devotional work, the *Vita Christi*, to meditation on the stories of Mary's birth and childhood. They form an important theme in Catalan poetry, although many of the *certamen* poets only refer fleetingly to them. One of the most integrated series of references is to be found in Balaguer's entry to the 1486 *certamen*. He first sets out his purpose: 'dictar laors de la flor subirana' [write praises of the sovereign flower] (1983: 504, l.2), and then weaves allusions to the apocryphal stories into the second stanza:

> La caritat de summa prescièn̦ça,
> exint de font d'eterna sapièn̦ça,
> d'excel·lents dons e dignitats insignes,
> dotà granment son temple ·ntalamat,
> qual fos volgué, per àngel nunciat
> a dos parents e persones condignes.
> Anna, però, per molt temps infecunda,
> aconseguí del Pare supernal
> pel sanct prenyat que fos aprés fecunda
> e aumentàs progènia carnal. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 504, ll.13–22)[13]

[13] The struggle Balaguer experiences with rhyme is underlined by the final two lines of the stanza, where 'taqua' rhymes with 'flaqua'. 'Flaqua' is introduced merely for expediency: 'D'on obtengués que no fos may en taqua, / del viure sant pagua prengués no flaqua' [From whence you were granted never to be stained, in holy living you took no little pleasure] (504, ll.23–24). Rhyming 'infecunda' with 'aprés fecunda' [barren / and afterwards fertile] is hardly felicitous and 'aumentàs progènia carnal'

[Charity of high foreknowledge,
from fount of eternal wisdom,
so richly endowed his temple
arrayed as a bridal chamber
with excellent gifts and worthy dignities.
As it was, he wished it,
announced by angel to two parents
both worthy persons.
Anne, however, for many years barren,
was granted by the supernal father
by the holy pregnancy to be fruitful
and fleshly progeny grew.]

Balaguer draws on certain key elements of the stories such as the double angelic annunciation and the infertility of Anne. There is a long description of the Almighty, as possessing 'summa presciençia exint de font d'eterna sapiençia' [high foreknowledge from the fount of eternal wisdom]. Balaguer also emphasizes the aspect of divine will. God wishes to shower gifts on the future mother of Christ, 'son temple ·ntalamat' [his temple arrayed as a bridal chamber], culminating in the gift of pregnancy to Anne. Except for the fleeting reference to 'dos pares', emphasis is on conception by Anne.

Balaguer returns to Anne's sterility in the sixth stanza of his poem. He includes it among many elements of the apocryphal story about St Anne, such as the fact she is a relative of Joachim's, and her excellent reputation. He also refers to the way in which the birth of the Virgin allows St Anne to re-establish herself in the community. The apocryphal stories relate how she had been distraught when her husband and his offering were rejected by the priest in the temple, and how she cried in the garden at the sight of the sparrow family. Following the birth, a mixture of heavenly and earthly joy ensues. The angels, the fore-fathers of the couple in limbo, and the relatives of Joachim celebrate the birth in a tableau which owes details to the birth of Christ with the angel hosts borrowed from there.

Naxent aprés, gran goig e alegria,
del bell estell per tot lo món se fia:
àngels en cels, en limbe los sancts pares,
en terra tots parents de Joachim,
cognació d'Anna, segons legim,

[fleshly progeny grew] for Anne's pregnancy is ill-chosen to rhyme with 'pare supernal' [supernal father].

fembra d'onor e de costumes clares.
L'estel delí del pare la afama.
D'Anna renom d'esteril en comú,
tornà tantost laor de bona fama.
Son loch e nom recuperà cascú.
¿Qui porà dir la vida de infantesa
angelical e de molt gran altesa? (505–506, ll.61–72)

[Then when she was born, great joy and rejoicing,
through all the world there is trust for the beautiful star:
angels in heaven, in limbo the holy fathers,
on earth all the family of Joachim,
related to Anne, as we read,
a woman of honour and good habits.
Star, delight of the father, she is called,
and Anne's renown as barren
soon turned to praise of her as a good wife
her place and her good name were recovered.
Who could tell of the life of the princess
of angels and of such nobility?]

The stanza ends on a question, which allows Balaguer to introduce some features of the Virgin's childhood and character. He devotes a whole stanza to the life of the little princess and her dedication at the temple, embroidering it with details of her fasting, prayer, and exemplary behaviour.[14]

[14] Balaguer takes inspiration for the childhood of the Virgin, her dedication to the temple, her exemplary life, and the visitation by angels, from the Apocryphal Gospels:

Com de bon jest e dolç esguart, quant noble,
affable, tant d'espant a tot lo poble,
del bell present, offerta fet· al temple
de gran valor, infanta volentés
volgué complir lo vot d'ella promés,
mostrant a tots de si molt gran exemple:
celestial per l'alt Senyor eleta
d'umilitat excessament sens par,
junant, orant, en hora de completa,
molt pacient, suau, e poch parlar,
spiritual, en lo voler justada,
de sancts consells, per àngels visitada. (1983: 506, ll.73–84)

[As of gentle gesture and sweet attentiveness, how noble,
pleasant, so in awe are the people,
of the beautiful gift, the offering made to the temple
of great value, a willing princess
who wanted to fulfil the vow promised for her,
showing everyone a great example:

Anne's barrenness is an important theme for Vinyoles in his 1486 *certamen* entry. The poet has already established his adherence to the Conception using his reasoning:

> Donchs si trobam que per vós ha remuda
> Déu infinit nostra colpa primera,
> és error gran creure sou concebuda
> en aquell crim d'on natura cayguda
> pogués pujar en la superna spera. (1983: 449, ll.42–46)
>
> [Then, if we find that Infinite God
> removed the first sin through you,
> it is great error to believe you were conceived
> in that sin whence fallen nature
> you could rise into the heavenly sphere.]

He shows that immaculism is necessary because of the Assumption: 'pogués pujar en la superna spera' [you could rise into the heavenly sphere]. If she could be assumed into heaven then sin could not have touched her at the beginning of her life. Into this context, he weaves allusions to the Virgin's parentage:

> L'estèril camp del ventre de sent· Anna,
> passat lo temps per a poder concebre
> vos produy pura de carn humana
> a denotar que d'on puritat mana
> corruptió ni ·s pot ni ·s deu percebre. (1983: 449, ll.49–53)
>
> [The sterile field of the womb of St Anne,
> the age when she might conceive being long gone
> produced you pure of human flesh
> to indicate that, in a place where purity springs,
> corruption cannot nor should be perceived.]

Vinyoles's use of 'camp' [field] allies the fertility of Anne with the earth. Ann W. Astell comments that association with Anne with earth, root, and tree is common in English poetry (1997: 411). The apocryphal story is used to provide proof that Anne's womb was holy but Vinyoles does

---

> heavenly, chosen by the Lord above
> absolutely peerless in humility,
> fasting, praying, at compline,
> very patient, sweet and little given to chatter,
> spiritual, fixed in will,
> holy in counsel, visited by angels.]

Some of the features of Balaguer's description have much in common with those in the *Vita Christi* (1916–1918). Isabel de Villena also describes Adam and Eve in limbo.

not shy away from using the same argument for Anne as for the Virgin herself, whose womb also needed to be pure. Anne's barrenness serves as a gage of the pure state of her womb, whilst the Virgin's is dependent on her Immaculate Conception to prepare her for reception of Christ in the Incarnation. Just as Alfonso the Wise relied on Joachim's abstention to purify Anne's womb, so Vinyoles highlights her infertility and old age: 'passat lo temps per a poder concebre' [the age when she might conceive was long gone]. In his attempt to purify the act of conception, he evokes the arguments of its early defenders, like Nicholas of St Albans, who parallels the act of conception with that of Adam and Eve, before the corruption of sin marred their state of innocence. Nicholas discusses the difference between *concupiscentia naturali* and *concupiscentia corruptionis* and describes the act which led to the conception of Mary as akin to the first not to the second.

Jaime Roig, in the *Espill*, follows a long diatribe against women (1978: 148) with a theological section, in scholastic style, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and to her Immaculate Conception. This section of the poem (1978: 153) is followed by laudatory epithets interwoven with allusions to the apocryphal nativity:

> […] Puis confegí
> santificada, verga plantada
> per dar salut al món perdut,
> en mig del temps entre'ls estrems
> del món en mig, en lo config
> de la promesa terra sotsmesa
> als de Judà. Déu saludà
> en lo mig jorn lo món entorn
> tot, d'orient fins al ponent,
> ab la sabor, suau olor
> de tal canyella, sarment novella,
> de bàlsem planta, filla tant santa
> de sants parents, jutges sabents,
> patriarchals, e profetals,
> e sacerdots sancts e devots,
> e dels reals a Déu lleals. (1978: 161)

> [Then he confected, sanctified
> a planted root
> to give salvation to the lost world
> in mid time between the extremes of the world in its midst
> in the confection of the promised land,
> under the sway of Judah.
> God saluted the whole world at midday

from East to West,
with the odour, sweet scent
of such cinnamon, new seed,
plant of balsam, holy daughter,
of holy parents, wise judges,
patriarchs, and prophets,
and holy, wise priests,
and kings loyal to God.]

Mary's genealogy is not just from Anne but, through her, connects to a patriarchal lineage: 'jutges sabents, patriarchals, e prophetals' [wise judges, patriarchs, and prophets]. Roig combines this part of the poem with a reference to the Virgin's pre-election for her role:

ans que'l món fos, ell gloriós
en l'eternal in mente, tal
com papa fa, la reservà
e prelegí. (1978: 161)

[Before the world came into being,
in eternity, in his mind,
as a father does,
he, glorious, preserved
and pre-elected her.]

'Ans que'l món fos' [before the world] sets the apocryphal stories in an immaculist context by combining them with predestination (see Chapter 8). Roig then turns to an oblique reference to the Virgin as 'verga plantada', alluding to the poem from Isaiah which foretells the nature of the Messiah, already examined in the *Cantigas* and present in Nativity liturgies:

A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse,
a new shoot will grow from his roots
On him will rest the spirit of Yahweh. (Isaiah 11.1)

Later in the same poem, there are references to the coming day of salvation:

That day the root of Jesse, standing as a signal for the peoples
will be sought out by the nations and its home will be glorious.
the Lord will raise his hand a second time
to ransom the remnant of his people.
Then Ephraim's jealousy will cease
and Judah's enemies will be suppressed. (Isaiah 11.10, 13)

Isaiah alludes to the submission of Judah's enemies and is echoed by Roig in 'terra sotsmesa als de Judà' [land under the sway of Judah].

The special day of the Messiah, described from verse 11.6 onwards is echoed in 'en mig del temps' [at the appointed time] and 'en lo mig jorn' [at midday]. Roig wishes to associate the Virgin with messianic lineage, but also with the coming of the Messiah by granting the day of her birth an heroic importance.

Using Jesse's rod or root to prefigure the Virgin, as Roig does, is commonplace in the period. In art, connection between the Tree of Jesse and the Virgin Mary's genealogy was made early, and gradually developed in meaning, until, by the late sixteenth century, it came to refer to the Immaculate Conception (Stratton 1994: 13). It is found at second night prayer in many liturgies and is also used by immaculist poets, like Pere de Civillar. He uses the root of Jesse as a figure of the Virgin in his *certamen* poem: 'O reyna, senyora, vienes de la vit / d· aquell santo Jassé, do viene David' [O Queen, lady, you come from the vine of that holy Jesse, whence David comes] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 300, ll.33–34). The heroic significance accorded to the moment of birth is encapsulated in Roig's words 'Déu saluda / en lo mig jorn' [God greets, at midday], with its biblical and literary precedents. The poet creates a messianic context by the use of biblical and floral figures to represent the Virgin, including scents, taste of cinnamon, and balsam wood which are associated with the 'verga plantada' and merge into 'filla tan santa / de sants parents' [holy daughter of holy parents]. Her lineage includes judges, patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings.

Roig's naming ceremony for Mary also has brief allusions to apocryphal stories:

> De fet fon nada, fon nomenada
> nom honorós, bell, graciós,
> per Déu manat, e comanat,
> pel missatger, àngel certer
> al pare prom, li posàs nom
> molt alt: 'Maria'. (1978: 161)
>
> [So she was born, was named
> honorable, beautiful, full of grace,
> ordained by God, and commended
> by the messenger, true angel
> close to the Father, gave her a very noble
> name: Mary.]

It is on the command of God, via an annunciation, that the name is given. The naming echoes the story of the angelic vision and prophecy to Joachim, as well as of the Gospel story of the naming of John the

Baptist. Finally, Roig echoes the words of the angel at the naming of Christ. The appointed time 'en lo mig jorn' resonates in the meaning given to her name: 'Vol dir migdia' [It means midday] (1978: 161).

Finally, Roig turns to the apocryphal narrative for Mary's childhood. He uses the stories to set Mary's early life in the context of that of a mythical hero, adapting the Gospel story of the youthful Christ in the Temple to provide additional evidence of her intellectual powers. She dominates debate like a Doctor of theology: 'doctoressa / dels majós mestres' [lady doctor of the highest masters] (1978: 162)

> Essent txiqueta, d'edat poqueta,
> e delicada, fon dedicada
> servir al temple on fon exemple
> de santedat. (1978: 161)
>
> [Tiny, young in years,
> and delicate, she was dedicated
> to serve the temple where she was an example
> of holiness.]

The Virgin's high theological standing is another manifestation of the topic of the reading Virgin, outlined earlier in this chapter. Roig also shows Mary climbing the fifteen steps of the temple, one of the symbolic elements of her childhood from the Apocryphal Gospels and a scene which was much depicted in medieval art particularly on altar retables.

However, whilst Roig uses aspects of the apocryphal stories to describe the Virgin's birth and miraculous childhood, he prefers to establish the Immaculate Conception through scholastic argument and biblical allusion. Roig's attitude seems to bear out the argument that reliance on such stories was losing ground in theological circles in the fifteenth century. The *Espill* could provide literary evidence of a shift away from using the Apocryphal Gospels to represent Mary's Conception.

This might mean that apocryphal birth stories are to be regarded as more appropriate to the Nativity of the Virgin. Study of Jaume d'Olesa's poem, 'Triunphes de Nostra Dona' (1983: 371) seems to bear the theory out. He dedicates the first stanza to the Conception of Mary and the second to the Apocryphal Gospel accounts of her Nativity. The first stanza relates how the Virgin was conceived without sin:

> Vós triünphau per ésser concebuda
> sens algun crim per obra del Senyor,
> del Qual haveu tal gràcia rebuda,

que us féu honor
en grau tan alt, qu·aprés d'Ell sou major. (371, ll.5–9)

[You triumphed for being conceived
without any sin by the hand of the Lord,
from whom you had received such grace
that he did you honour
to such a high degree, that after Him you are the greatest.]

Olesa involves both action by God and action of redeeming grace in his view of the Conception and, then, turns to the Nativity of the Virgin:

Vós triünphau, que, stant dins en lo ventre
sanctíssim de la mare sancta Anna,
d'un saber nou rebés infusa manna,
que·ntengués Déu de beatitut centre.
Vós triünphau pels dons maravellosos
que us donà ·l Fill en la Nativitat,
car a vós tots los àngels gloriosos
han ministrat. (371–372, ll.10–17)

[You triumphed when, in the womb
of your most holy mother Anne
you received infused manna of new knowledge
which God extended from the centre of blessedness.
You triumphed through the marvellous gifts
the Son gave you in your Nativity
for to you the glorious angels
have ministered.]

Reference to the Apocryphal Gospels is minimal, with the only detail the name of the Virgin's mother, but Olesa's contribution to an understanding of what the Immaculate Conception meant to the poets is that he distinguishes a three-stage preparation of the Virgin for her role. First, she is prepared through her cleansing by the action of the Spirit, second, by the infusion of knowledge from the Father, and, third, by the gifts showered on her by the Son. The infusion of 'saber nou' represents the moment of the tiny Virgin receiving her soul, which the theologians thought was at about eighty days after conception. The poem marks a theological divergence from the mainstream view of a single infusion of grace at the moment of conception. The triple process of sanctification is much closer to Aquinas's view. It also reveals the fluid state of mariological debate and what was permissible as defence of the Conception.

The second addition to the apocryphal story is 'dins lo ventre sanctíssim' [in her most holy womb], originally applied to the Virgin and now to her mother. This is a poetic witness to the artistic tendency

towards interest in the saintly life of St Anne, which led to the granting of a miraculous conception to Anne and to interest in the saintly life of her mother, Esmerentia (Warner 1976: 243).

Several poets provide evidence that this backward spiral of holiness was operating in Aragon. Pere de Anyó's poem, where the epithet 'eleta per mare' [chosen as mother], usually applied to the Virgin, is used of her mother: 'Entràs dins lo ventre d'aquela que ús era / eleta per mare, beneyta sent· Ana' [you entered the womb of the one who was chosen for you as mother, blessed St Anne] (1983: 511, ll.9–10). Lluís Cathalà's 1486 *certamen* poem also applies to her mother the image of the womb as a holy temple, traditionally a prefiguration of the Virgin: 'pura us dexà dins maternal temple' [he left you pure in maternal temple] (1983: 479, l.33).

The question of how natural generation could have produced an immaculate child tests other *certamen* poets. Miralles refers briefly to the parents of the Virgin, whilst looking for analogy with other natural phenomena which support a different element in their midst:

> De la gran mar les aygües son salades,
> enmig les quals fonts d'aygua dolça troben.
> Donchs ¿qui dirà vostres carns són tacades,
> fetes per dos penses ab Déu justades,
> on Pare e Fill hi l'Esperit sant obren?
> Car si tacats los pares engendraren,
> la vostra carn en res no alteraren. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 454, ll.18–24)
>
> [Of the great sea the waters are salty,
> amid them springs of fresh water are found.
> Then, who will say your flesh is stained
> produced by two minds fixed on God,
> where Father, Son and Holy Spirit operate?
> For even if conceived in sin by your parents
> they did not affect your flesh at all.]

Miralles makes the connection between other natural examples of different elements co-existing to argue for a holy passive conception from an active one which could not have been wholly sinless. His example echoes Eadmer's famous example of the chestnut, where a hard spiky exterior disguises a soft inner part of the nut. Miralles's second argument, linked to it, is that the active generation does not affect the pure flesh of the Virgin, passively conceived. For good measure, the poet adds the fact that the two of them had their thoughts fixed on God. In this, his views are similar to those of the twelfth-century defenders of

the Conception. Nicholas of St Albans's arguments emphasize the holy nature of the Virgin's parents, together with the fact that they obeyed God in their union, which ensured that they did not conceive in concupiscence: 'une union depourvue de toute jouissance' [a union stripped of any joy] (Lamy 2000: 113).

Whilst some poets, as has been indicated, give a number of details about Anne, the majority of poets use the Apocryphal Gospels for nothing other than to refer to her name. They even reduce her to her most important feature, her womb:

> Coronada dins lo ventre
> de la mare que ·m parí
> perquè yo fos digne centre
> del Qui nou meses portí. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 339, ll.13–16)
>
> [Crowned in the womb
> of the mother who bore me
> for I was a worthy centre
> for the one whom I carried for nine months.]

Anne, unnamed, is the 'la mare que ·m parí' in the poem which finishes the collection of poems in the 1474 *certamen*. It was written by Fenollar but the words are placed in the mouth of the Virgin. His description of Anne with the Virgin enclosed in her is not an isolated example. The *Introit* to the 1486 *certamen*, written by Ferrando Díeç, expresses the same sentiments:

> Vos fa ·b son Fill
> d'arbitre franch tengués l'espill
> vent lo Mesies
> closa dins Anna, fent-li vies
> que us fos espòs
> fins que dins vós seria clos. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 435, ll.19–24)
>
> [He made you with his Son
> of free will you hold the mirror
> showing the Messiah
> enclosed in Anne, making way
> for him to be your husband
> so that he would be enclosed in you.]

The triple enclosure recalls St Anne Trinitarian images but it also has an echo of creation. The action of God is emphasized in 'vos fa' and the mirror is another of the Conception signifiers, which would become associated with the *Tota pulchra es*. Genís Fira limits himself to seeing Anne as an enclosure for the Virgin with the briefest of details about her:

> En hun instant essent organitzada,
> Verge ·xcel·lent dins vostre mare casta,
> vós presentàs, de complit seny dotada,
> virginitat, joya tan estimada […]. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 294, ll.31–34)[15]
>
> [In one instant, once you were ordered,
> excellent Virgin, in your chaste mother,
> he presented you, endowed with full understanding,
> with virginity, such an esteemed jewel (…).]

He indicates that she is chaste and describes her as a receptacle for the Virgin. The Virgin received the gift of virginity from God in her mother's womb. The receptacle Anne provides is imbued with the value of its contents and becomes a jewel-case, when the jewel of virginity is placed there.

Fenollar takes the same basic idea but develops it a little, taking the trouble to compare the cases of Anne and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. The use of 'en lo centre' is also of interest, since it recalls many of the pictures of St Anne Trinitarian, where Anne is pictured as a frame for the Virgin and Child:

> Y així com d'ell portant-lo dins lo ventre
> Elisabet romàs tostemps alegra,
> y de vós més sent· Ana que ·n lo centre
> digna us tengué perquè res trist may entre
> en pura neu de màcula tan negra. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 492, ll.42–46)
>
> [And so carrying him in her womb
> Elizabeth stayed completely happy,
> and, even more so, was St Anne

[15] Francí de Vilalba also refers only fleetingly to St Anne as the source of the pure flesh of the Virgin:

> Lo Pare Déu per natura humana
> tramés lo Verb. Son Fill, Déu verdader,
> prés carn de vós, de puritat fontana,
> pura sens mal, carn presa de sent· Ana,
> sens lo peccat original primer. (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 521, ll.12–17)
>
> [Father God transmitted the Word
> by human nature. His Son, true God,
> took flesh from you, fount of purity,
> pure without ill, flesh from St Anne,
> without the first original sin.]

about you, who held you in a worthy centre,
for nothing of black sin
ever stained your pure whiteness.]

A variation on the same theme of Anne / womb is offered by Miralles in his attempt to win the sailing map. He gives the resonance the overriding nautical feel which has already been noted (see Chapter 8): 'Quant se varà lo leny de vostra vida / dins la gran mar de la casta sent· Ana, / de sanctedat fós feta hi bastida' [When the sweetness of your life is approached in the great sea of chaste St Anne, of sanctity you were made and built] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 515, ll.37–39). There is little detail from the apocryphal stories. Anne provides a great sea for the Virgin to sail, but there is no more description of her than a single epithet, chaste.

Conceptualization of the relationship between mother and daughter is a feature of Centelles's poem, with which he is seeking to win the marzipan prize. He constructs it around the description of the Virgin as a sweetmeat: 'Confit inmortal en capça molt pura' [Immortal sweetmeat in very pure casing] (in Ferrando Francés 1983: 501, l.1). The Conception feast and doctrine are also sweetmeats, which he calls on opponents of the Conception doctrine to taste: 'gustau un poquet' [take a little taste] (l.26). When Centelles turns his attention to the manner of the Conception, he describes it using the terminology of confectionery. Amidst the sugary allusions, details from the apocryphal story are minimal:

Mesclat ab lo ros de çucre de manna,
de dolçes amelles confita la pasta:
aquesta ·s la mare del Fill de Osanna,
Aquest és lo nét d'aquella sant· Anna
que ·n mena d'or fi de verge s'engasta.
Suau és lo gust qui tal confit gusta,
puix no té peccat lo loch hon s'ajusta. (l.42)

[Mixed with the dew of sugared manna,
with sweet almonds the dough:
she is the mother of the Son of the Almighty,
he is the grandson of that St Anne
who in a vein of fine gold encased the Virgin.
Delicate is the taste of such a sweetmeat,
for the place where it is confined has no sin.]

The ingredients contain a number of biblical allusions: manna, again applied to the Virgin rather than to her Son and dew, which alludes to the dewfall, which dampened only Gideon's fleece (Judges 6.38). By

the seventeenth century, the dewy fleece was part of the *Tota pulchra es* (see also Chapter 7 for a discussion of the dew on the rose). Centelles's allusion to the vein of gold suggests the thinking of twelfth-century theologians who allude to the existence of an incorrupt vein of purity to justify the Conception of Mary.

Conclusion

The apocryphal references present in Alfonso the Wise's *Cantigas* are vigorous and provide the vehicle for the poet's reflection on the parentage, conception, and sanctification of the Virgin. Alfonso has been described as the first Castilian to write in literary terms about the Immaculate Conception. However, there are two points to be made. Alfonso does not show any awareness of the Conception feast and all the references he makes to the sanctification of the Virgin are ambiguous. It is possible to argue that his concern is to prove the sanctified birth of the Virgin. He is witness to unbounded interest in the origins and sanctity of the Virgin.

Warner has argued that, in art, by the end of the fifteenth century, there was a definite shift to be discerned away from the Apocryphal Gospels as a vehicle for description of the Conception of Mary. Despite the interest in the apocryphal stories shown in fifteenth-century prose, by authors such as Sor Isabel de Villena, in poetry there is relatively little usage of them in the context of the Immaculate Conception. Many of the poets allude only to the name of the Virgin's mother or parents, others refer to their saintly lifestyle, or to the way in which they are dutiful to God. Anne's barrenness is recorded by some. Where the apocryphal stories are used at length, their purpose is to describe the Nativity or childhood of the Virgin rather than support the Conception doctrine. In *cancionero* poetry, less interest in apocryphal stories is apparent in the poems which have been preserved. Only Juan Álvarez Gato dedicates a *canción* to St Anne. This may be for a variety of reasons. Fifteenth-century poetry is indebted to scholastic disputation, which had enormous influence on representation of the Immaculate Conception. There is also evidence that new biblical symbolism, like the *Tota pulchra es*, is developing in poetry, although its use is not in any way systematic. It was eventually to replace the traditional infancy narratives describing Mary's physical conception.

Poets may sometimes have preferred to base their defence of her

Conception on argument and various types of biblical prefiguration but they still felt the need to discuss and justify the physical conception of the Virgin, generally with some degree of reference to the Apocryphal Gospels. Gradually, the apocryphal stories would be relegated to describing the special childhood of the Virgin, whilst the miraculous conception was described using other means. Signs of the movement are already visible in the writing of Roig but it had not yet come in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Poets and authors combined all the various methods at their disposal, including the apocryphal stories, to promote the doctrine of the Conception of the Virgin.

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